England on defensive

ALTHOUGH the second cricket Test match between Australia and England ended in a draw at Perth, the English were put psychologically on to the defensive following an injury to their all-rounder, Ian Botham. He pulled up while bowling with a strained intercostal rib muscle and the days between now and the third Test at Adelaide this week will be filled with concern and doubts that he will be unavailable, at least to bowl.

Two of the men who might have challenged to fill his place at Adelaide did little for their chances in the opening stages of the match against Victoria, at Melbourne at the weekend. Opener Slack went for 10 and Whitaker went for a duck as England waxed hot and cold after dismissing Victoria for 101. And the opening day was marred by an embarrassing blunder from the England captain, Mike Gatting. He overslept and missed the first five overs of the match. Gatting apologised, blaming tiredness after the long flight from Perth, but the England captain was later disciplined for his gaffe.

He made some amends by taking four of the Victorian wickets, three of them to catches by Foster at fine leg off poor hook shots. Gatting ended with four for 31, but was less successful with the bat, making only one, in England's reply of 263. Athey, 58, French, 58, Lamb, 46, and Foster, 46, were the substance of that reply.

Lamb was to an extent playing for his Test place. At Perth he had a duck in the first innings and two in the second, when England were going for quick runs to try to set up a second win in the series. It was always going to be problematical after Australia's captain, Allan Border, had destroyed England's hopes of forcing the follow-on for the second time with an excellent, dogmatic 125 in their first innings. At one stage Australia were 198 for five in reply to England's first innings of 592 for eight declared. But Border set an example for his men and led them to a reply of 401, aided by 71 from Waugh and 45 from Matthews.

Botham, a duck in the first innings after the mastery of his first Test innings, again did little in the second, hitting only six. But Gatting, 70, and Gower, 48, saw them to 199 for eight at the end of the fourth day. And when the final day started Gatting declared at that total, sparking off controversy over whether he should have declared late on the fourth day and gone for a quick wicket or two before the close.

In the event England had a success off the first ball of the day, Boon falling to Dilley. But there was a new mood among the Australians and, led by Jones, 69, and Marsh, 49, they saw out play at 197 for four. Botham had to quit the field in mid-over and took no further part, but before he left he equalled the world record of Sir Garfield Sobers in completing the all-rounder Test treble of 1,000 runs, 100 wickets, and 100 catches. Botham became the eighth non-wicket-keeper to hold 100 Test catches when he dismissed Boon off Dilley's bowling. That's the sort of inspired all-round ability that England will be hoping will still be with them in the third Test, following an eventual five-wicket win over Victoria.

Matthew Engel watches the America's Cup from an unstable vantage point

Sport for strong stomachs

FIRST, a personal statement. I have, in my time in this business, acquired some expertise in the matter of naff sporting events. I have been to Wellingborough Town FC in a blizzard: I have done a Test match in Faisalabad: I have reported the Pro All-in Karate circuit. I reckon I deserve to be under blue skies in Fremantle in a Lacoste shirt and soft shoes with all these underdressed blondes about.

The great thing about Wellingborough Town, however, is that the stand, under normal circumstances, stays where it was when the game started. The Tasmanian Devil, the 30ft catamaran which serves as one of the main vantage points for the America's Cup does not.

It moves about vaguely in the direction of the competing yachts. It also goes up. And it goes down. And it repeats the procedure at unpleasantly frequent intervals. When I went on it, the sky was not even very blue: it was a sort of grey-blue which went with the grey-brown of the sea and the grey-green of my countenance. Conditions were officially described as "moderate".

There are moments at least occasionally in most people's lives when the world starts shifting around and you suddenly realise you're pissed. I spent five hours like that, and I'd only had a cup of tea. A lot of beer gets drunk each night in Fremantle: I don't think it's relaxation so much as acclimatisation.

From a distance, this was probably the most thrilling day so far in the Great Australian Sailathon, the day the New Zealanders beat Stars and Stripes. Yet even for the privileged spectators in the flotilla off the coast, very little of the thrill managed to convey itself.

Dozens of boats were out there, including the Aga Khan's huge second-best yacht ("my other car's a Porsche") as well as several helicopters. I rather hoped one of those might be Air-Sea Rescue and winch me up. Among the regulars on the Devil, there was some discussion about the racing tactics. Among us grockles there was rather more discussion about sea-sickness. One Aussie suggested an infallible cure: "go and sit under a tree."

In the evening Alan Bond, the ex-signwriter from Ealing who brought the cup to Australia, appeared at a press conference, which he is likely to do more often as his current boat, Australia IV, approaches the moment of truth. Lately, he has been devoting more time to running his businesses and Australia, which he appears to do in a syndicate including Messrs Murdoch, Packer, John Elliott the Foster's brewer, Holmes a'Court and occasionally Bob Hawke.

The manoeuvres on the water constitute less of a spectator sport, which is the main reason Western Australia has had to halve its original estimate of a million visitors, and why a lot of people here may go bust even if Australia retains the trophy, rising to an awful lot if it goes elsewhere.

But now that so many countries can compete with the Americans, this thing is bound to find a place among the world's major sporting events.

It all seems very far-fetched, but if White Crusader were to win, Torbay would probably be turned into the next Fremantle. I remember the Fremantle of just four years back, a run-down port whose main claim to sporting fame had ceased in 1960 when English cricket teams stopped arriving by boat.

Now it is all boutiques and pedestrian malls and poncey restaurants and pavement cafes with names like Lombardo's and Papa Luigi's. It would be nice to come back in February and report on a British triumph. If that happens, I propose to cover it from under a parasol at Papa Luigi's. Alternatively, under a tree.

One goal is too many for Arsenal

ARSENAL, riding high at the top of English soccer's First Division, suffered a rare rebuff to their pride at the weekend. Although they duly beat London neighbours Queen's Park Rangers they were almost as obsessed by the fact that they had a goal scored against them for the first time in seven matches. There was much discussion in the dressing room about the shot from Rangers' Bannister that beat goalkeeper Lukic. "It was almost as if we had lost," said Lukic, "although no one pointed a finger at anyone else." There's many a side in the land would wish for similar problems, for by the time that goal came Arsenal were already three goals ahead.

It leaves them still two points clear of Nottingham Forest at the top and looking forward to a winnable clutch of five matches that should see them firmly favourites for the title by New Year's Day. Their manager, George Graham, is going through one of those charmed periods where his men are playing so well that established players temporarily out of favour, such as Nicholas and Rix, are finding it ever harder to force their way back.

The League champions, Liverpool, on the other hand, are going through one of their introspective phases, made all the gloomier by losing 2-0 at Watford at the weekend. Liverpool's midfield looked ragged without the injured Molby, but the club's long run of success has been built partly on the premise that there is always another man as good waiting in the wings to take your place. The critics were not impressed at Watford where too often Liverpool were reduced to the tired cliche of the hopeful high centre into the opposition's goalmouth. Watford, on the other hand, were swift and incisive, much to the joy of their best crowd of the season, 23,934, who paid record recipts of more than £80,000.

Liverpool had been discommoded in midweek by the continuing controversy over the transfer of their star goalscorer, Ian Rush to the Italian club, Juventus. Anxious Liverpool supporters had formed a "Rush musn't go" faction and had embarrassed the club by their demonstrations at recent matches, particularly over their claims that Rush had never wished to leave the club. But after a flurry of talks last week Rush announced: "In June I signed a legally binding contract to play for Juventus and I intend to honour my agreement."

The club's chief executive, Peter Robinson, said that the club shared supporters' disappointment that Rush would be going next season, but the Italians had made an offer that Liverpool could not match. Juventus are to pay £3·2 million for Rush, who could emerge from his Italian period a millionaire.

Two go through

THE WEEKEND'S soccer matches in England included the second round of the FA Cup, the last stage before the big boys in the league join the fray. Only two non-league sides won through at the first attempt, almost inevitably including Telford, and Maidstone United, who beat league opposition in Cambridge United 1-0. Three other non-league sides have to play again if they are to go through. They include Chorley, conquerors of once-mighty Wolverhampton Wanderers in the last round. This time they drew 0-0 against another once famous club, Preston North End. So far Chorley's run has earned them enough to wipe off a bank debt of £11,000 and cleared the £15,000 they need for ground improvements.

Alan Dunn's DIARY

IN SCOTLAND Glasgow Celtic stay clear at the top of the Premier Division by six points, but only after suffering a rebuff in midweek when they were beaten 1-0 by Hearts. It ended Celtic's unbeaten run of 16 matches and sent Hearts into third place behind Dundee United. Celtic were back in good form at the weekend, beating Dundee 2-0, while all the chasing clubs were in goalless games.

New sponsors

SUNDAY league cricket in England is to have new sponsors next season. The Refuge Assurance Company are to put £2·5 million into the competition over five years. They replace the tobacco firm, John Player, who have sponsored the 40-over competition since its inception in 1969. From 1988 there will be a new ending to the league programme, a knockout tournament involving the top four clubs with the final at one of the Test grounds.

Amateur shocks

AMATEUR golf in Britain suffered one of its biggest shocks last week when two of its leading players, Peter McEvoy and Garth McGimpsey were omitted from the Great Britain and Ireland team to play the United States for the Walker Cup at Sunningdale next May. The chairman of selectors, Rodney Foster, said that although the two "may be able to play at a certain level they cannot turn it on against the United States." McGimpsey was Amateur champion last year, a title McEvoy won in 1977 and 1978. McEvoy is also the only British amateur to have survived all four rounds of the US Masters and twice been top amateur in the Open championship. He has lost only three of his 52 singles matches for England. Both were in the four-man team representing Britain and Ireland in the world team championship in Venezuela in October. The Walker Cup team is: D. Carrick, D. Curry, R. Eggo, P. Girvan, J. McHenry, G. Macgregor, P. Mayo, G. Montgomerie, J. Robinson, G. Shaw.

£1m prize money

MEANWHILE, the prize-money for women's professional golf in Europe next season will for the first time top £1 million. This is in contrast to the £83,000 on offer in the first professional tour in 1979. Eleven of the 30 events will be on the Continent of Europe, where the biggest crowds have been attracted to women's golf.

Meaningless contests

LAWN TENNIS'S climax to the year-long Grand Prix series in New York at the weekend descended into near farce when the semifinal pairings were decided by the toss of a coin. The pairings — ultimate victor Ivan Lendl v Mats Wilander and losing finalist Boris Becker v Stefan Edberg — at least avoided a meeting of Becker and Lendl but the earlier five hours and seven sets of tennis, much of it highly competitive, were rendered almost meaningless because the four semifinalists were known before play started. In awarding £15,000 to the winner of each of the 12 round-robin matches and introducing a random draw to determine into which semifinal the runner-up in each group should fall the organisers believed they would avoid charges of players rigging or throwing matches, as happened in 1982. Instead they were left with three meaningless contests.

Football results and league tables

TODAY LEAGUE: First Division: Arsenal 3, QPR 1; Charlton 1, Newcastle 1; Chelsea 0, Wimbledon 4; Coventry 1, Leicester 0; Everton 4, Norwich 0; Nottingham Forest 2, Manchester City 0; Oxford United 4, Luton 2; Sheffield Wednesday 2, Aston Villa 1. Watford 2, Liverpool 0; West Ham 3, Southampton 1. **Played Sunday:** Manchester United 3, Tottenham 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	18	11	4	3	30	9	37
Nottm Forest	18	11	2	5	40	24	35
Everton	18	9	5	4	31	18	32
Liverpool	18	9	4	5	36	22	31
West Ham	18	8	6	4	29	28	30
Sheffield Wed	18	7	8	3	34	26	29
Luton	18	8	5	5	21	16	29
Coventry	18	8	5	5	17	14	29
Norwich	18	8	5	5	26	28	29
Tottenham	18	7	5	6	24	22	26
Watford	18	7	4	7	33	25	25
Wimbledon	18	8	1	9	23	22	25
Oxford	18	6	6	6	22	30	24
Southampton	18	7	2	9	34	38	23
QPR	18	5	4	9	18	26	19
Manchester United	18	4	5	8	20	22	18
Newcastle	18	4	6	8	20	27	18
Charlton	18	5	3	10	19	30	18
Aston Villa	18	5	3	10	22	38	18
Leicester	18	4	5	9	20	30	17
Chelsea	18	3	7	8	19	34	16
Man City	18	3	6	9	16	25	15

Second Division: Birmingham 1, Blackburn 1. Brighton 2, Bradford 2; Derby 3, Reading 0: Huddersfield v Barnsley *postponed*; Hull 1, Grimsby 1; Ipswich 2, Sheffield United 2; Oldham 3. Shrewsbury 0; Portsmouth 2, Crystal Palace 0; Stoke 1, Plymouth 2; Sunderland 1, Millwall 1; West Bromwich 3, Leeds 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oldham	18	11	4	3	31	16	37
Portsmouth	18	10	6	2	23	11	36
Plymouth	18	9	6	3	29	21	33
Derby County	18	10	3	5	24	17	33
WBA	18	8	4	6	25	19	28
Ipswich	18	7	7	4	28	23	28
Leeds United	18	8	3	7	22	19	27
Sheffield United	18	6	7	5	23	21	25
Grimsby	18	6	7	5	18	17	25
Birmingham	18	6	6	6	25	25	24
Hull	18	7	3	8	16	27	24
Stoke	18	7	2	9	21	20	23
Sunderland	18	5	8	5	22	26	23
Millwall	18	6	4	8	20	20	22
Crystal Palace	18	7	1	10	22	32	22
Brighton	18	5	6	7	18	21	21
Shrewsbury	18	6	3	9	18	23	21
Reading	17	5	4	8	25	28	19
Bradford	17	5	4	8	25	30	19
Blackburn	17	4	4	9	16	22	16
Huddersfield	16	4	3	9	18	27	15
Barnsley	17	2	7	8	13	20	13

Third Division: Mansfield 1, Blackpool 1.

FINE FARE SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Celtic 2, Dundee 0; Dundee United 0, Aberdeen 0; Falkirk 1, Motherwell 0; Hamilton 0, Clydebank 0, Hibernian 0, Rangers 0; St Mirren 0, Hearts 0.

SCOTTISH PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	23	17	4	2	48	13	38
Dundee Utd	23	13	6	4	37	17	32
Hearts	23	129	7	4	31	19	31
Rangers	22	13	4	5	37	14	30
Aberdeen	23	11	8	4	35	17	30
Dundee	23	9	5	9	31	29	23
St Mirren	23	6	9	8	18	21	21
Falkirk	23	6	6	11	21	32	18
Motherwell	23	4	8	11	22	37	16
Hibernian	23	4	7	12	19	42	15
Clydebank	23	4	5	14	17	46	13
Hamilton	22	1	5	16	17	46	7

First Division: Brechin 2, Montrose 3; Dunfermline 2, Forfar 0; East Fife 2, Kilmarnock 1; Morton 3, Clyde 2; Partick 0, Dumbarton 2; Queen of the South 0, Airdrie 1.

FA CUP: First Round Replay: Brentford 2, Bristol Rovers 0.

Second Round: Aldershot 3, Colchester 2; Bolton 2, Tranmere 0; Bournemouth 0, Orient 1; Bristol City 1, Bath 1; Caernarfon 0, York 0; Chester 3, Doncaster 1; Chorley 0, Preston 0; Darlington 0, Wigan 5; Fulham 2, Newport 0; Gillingham 2, Chelmsford 0; Rochdale 1, Wrexham 4; Scunthorpe 1, Runcorn 0; Swansea 3, Slough 0; Swindon 3, Enfield 0; Telford 1, Altrincham 0; Walsall 5, Port Vale 0. **Played Friday:** Southend 4, Northampton 4. **Played Sunday:** Maidstone 1, Cambridge United 0: Notts County 0, Middlesbrough 1.

SCOTTISH FA CUP: First Round: Albion Rovers 2, Arbroath 1; Ayr 3, Annan Athletic 1; Forres Mechanics v Berwick Rangers postponed; Inverness Caledonians 2, Alloa 2; Peterhead 1, East Stirling 0; Stirling 3, Cowdenbeath 0.

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Is Reagan up to it?

DAMAGE from the Irangate affair continues to pour out of Washington like radiation from the Chernobyl disaster — unfortunately for President Reagan it can't be sealed in concrete. Last week the national hero, Lieut. Col. North, became the first serving officer in US history to refuse to testify before a congressional committee for fear of incriminating himself, closely followed by the former National Security Adviser, Admiral Poindexter, the brains behind the Libyan disinformation campaign in the autumn.

Congressional investigators failed to get much satisfaction either from Mr William Casey. The director of the CIA, the world's biggest spying organisation, said he had "no direct knowledge" that Iran arms sales were funding the contras, despite reports that he had raised the matter with Poindexter in October. He collapsed in his office on Monday and was taken to hospital, having suffered what was described as a minor cerebral seizure.

Both he and Mr Donald Regan, White House chief of staff, who was due to testify on Tuesday, are said to be about to lose their jobs early in the New Year. Meanwhile, some Reagan confidants are saying the crisis has raised fundamental questions about whether, at 75, the President has the leadership ability or understanding to cope. (See Lou Cannon, page 16.) *White House officials and senior Republicans, concerned at the damage being caused by the affair, are reported to have considered summoning the Western allies to a diversionary Washington summit to "prove" that the Administration is still in charge. But State Department officials have rejected the notion.*



The team comes apart

IT is the oddest of crises, since it neither waxes nor wanes, but merely carries on and on. There has been no sudden bustle of Washington house cleaning — the guilty sacked, the new brooms installed. But drifting inactivity has not fudged away the problem in boredom either. Mr Ronald Reagan affects the belief that, in a fortnight or so, the public concern will have died and there will be "business as usual". But, almost simultaneously, Mrs Nancy Reagan sketches a rather different scenario. She sees the chief of the CIA and the chief of the White House staff departing in disgrace: not immediately though, but as doomed, sacrificial victims of an octopus of a scandal that gradually strangles the political life out of them.

Alex Brummer, page 7
Bob Woodward, page 15

The clues to the true nature of the Tehran debacle were laid out in the open long ago. Turn, for example, to General Alexander Haig's memoirs of his time with Ronald Reagan. There is no doubt at all that the president commands the affection (even respect) of those round him. He can propound simple concepts — such as never raise taxes again, and star wars — and watch the professionals who cluster in his office fall into line. But when Reagan is not playing the oracle from California, matters fall out rather differently. He sits as the laid-back chairman of his advisers, listening to what they say and waiting for some kind of genial consensus to emerge. Once that agreement has begun to surface he simplifies it for wider propagation. It was because Al Haig never played in a team, never contributed to the production of consensus, that he found himself swiftly frozen out of even the beginnings of the process.

The Reagan style should not be too glibly derided. Jimmy Carter buried himself in detail, trying to keep a finger in every pot. But there is, obviously, one fundamental essential to the functioning of the laid-back presidency. The advisers have to be good; they have to be loyal; they have to deliver the options and the wisdom. And the stark fact of the present crisis is that they are broken, warring men. Donald Regan is the most senior of them all, destined for the chop. John Poindexter was the right-hand man in foreign affairs: now he pleads only the fifth amendment. William Casey was number one for the covert world: but this week he has been caught tapdancing with the truth on Capitol Hill. Those on the outside of the circle — like Shultz and Weinberger — are angry, and determined to eschew responsibility. Those on the inside are finished. In short, the engine has fallen out of the Reagan administration.

It is possible that something may yet be patched together. Mr Ed Meese — if he can escape the tentacles of scandal himself — is striving to save the presidency. Nancy is in there pitching. But the problems of recreating the consensus group round a manifestly old and bewildered man seem mountainous. It is not that the problems are not seen clearly. To the contrary, the Congressional clamour for a new, all-powerful crisis manager for the administration shows the way that even Mr Reagan's adversaries perceive real danger. For, intrinsically, these calls demand the appointment of a surrogate president to let Mr Reagan slide through his last two years. They assume that he cannot cope; and they are founded on the glum belief that no one who has his trust within the White House is capable of restoring the old checks and balances. That does not sound like a crisis that will go away; it sounds like the most profound and despairing of prognoses.

South Africa turns its back on the West

THE sweeping new restrictions on reporting opposition to the South African Government affect not only the domestic and foreign press but also Parliament and the courts. As such they constitute both an admission of weakness and a turning-point in the history of the country which can at once be recognised as such at the very moment of its occurrence. Until last week, South Africa, for all its massive restrictions and racial oppression, was able to seduce important sectors of opinion in the West with its claim to the underlying commitment to residual Western values. There was a sort of freedom of the press, even though that was doubly restricted by more than 100 statutes and then by the nationwide state of emergency declared in June. There was a vocal opposition in Parliament, which excluded the black majority but did not prevent members like Mrs Helen Suzman from speaking their minds outside the precincts. And there was also the right to report contemporaneously on court hearings about the abuse of detainees. All that is now swept away, and a news medium which wants to report any challenge to Pretoria's view must for the first time obtain clearance in advance of publication.

The excuse for this departure is the "total onslaught" on South Africa identified by the Government, a conveniently paranoid concept which has made a triumphant return after a couple of years in the political wilderness. The alleged threat comes from the neighbouring African states, like Mozambique and Angola, barely able to function after repeated South African interventions in their internal conflicts; like Lesotho and Swaziland, totally in thrall to Pretoria; like Zambia and Tanzania, on the verge of economic collapse; like Botswana, unique beacon of democracy in Africa, whose virtual encirclement makes it impotent. And like Zimbabwe, a state whose relatively sturdy viability is open to destabilisation at any time. It also comes from within, where organised opposition to apartheid is constantly diffused by differences not only between white and black but also between various African tribes, between workers and employers, between radicals and moderates, and even between parents and children. To all this the Government adds a long-standing conspiracy by the Soviet bloc, and the sanctions lobby in the West which is said to be playing into Communist hands. The response to this discordant opposition has been a set of emergency powers which enables the Government by its own admission, to detain on a given day about 250 children down to the age of eleven without charge or trial. Those trying to help detainees claim 4,000 children have been so detained.

Freedom of speech as exemplified by the freedom of the press is, in isolation, less important than the liberty of the subject. What is now happening in South Africa demonstrates that the two are inseparable. Until now it was possible to report that the South African police were using black children as whipping-boys and as ashtrays in their resistance to the "total onslaught". From now on such evidence will become available, if at all, only from Parliament in session or from a court which has completed its hearing. The real reason for this crucial change is not hard to find. The Government is concerned to demonstrate to white opinion, as an election draws near, that it is more than tough enough to deal with resistance from any quarter. But in seeking to outbid the White ultra-right the Government feels obliged to maintain both that 11-year-old African children are a genuine danger to the state, and also that it is essential to prevent such "threats" from being publicised. This may be intended as a demonstration of resolve. It oozes weakness.

INSIDE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Visas no indication of racism

A. Simons (Letters, Nov 16) should get the facts straight before asking James Lewis to look towards India "to see racism at its best."

It is news to me that the English and Australian are racially different, but that is largely irrelevant. Australia requires a visa of every foreign visitor except a New Zealander, much as India does of just about every non-Indian these days.

I am a US resident holding an Indian passport and have travelled 16 times to the UK and four times to Australia. Never once have I been bothered or inconvenienced by the need to procure an Aussie visa. Before I travel again to England, however, I'll think twice — the climate has changed.

In contrast to my American friends, I require visas to travel to most European countries (even before the current regulations), but that is the price of political divisions. It is unfortunate that British passport-holders have to pay five times what dinkum Aussie does, but that too is politics, hardly racism!

On a different note, holders of a British passport don't always fare well in the UK either. A few years ago, East Africans got stuck with the Queen's passport — maybe Hong Kongers will be next, in 11 years. But Rhodesians never did have any problems, nor, I suspect, will South Africans.

R. Balasubramanian,
Nashua, N.H.

The infuriating verb to havernize

Derek Roberts's concern that he may be the only person to find the practice of "Have a nice day" insincere and unnecessary is unfounded. There are many people in the States who wish the phrase would go away.

Some months ago the New York Times printed an article by a visiting Englishman who had had it with nice days. Among other things, he posited that there is a verb "havernize" in American English. I pray he did not hear of the crazed bureaucrat in Washington who wanted to have every bus in the US carry the damnable phrase on the reels which give destinations.

John F. Miller,
Boylston, Boston, MA.

Reagan at mercy of 'bigots'

An opportunity to open to the Moslem world has been lost. The braveness of President Reagan, earlier shown at Reykjavik, later shown by his emissaries to Iran, to create a dialogue has been punished by the bigots of the West.

Iran has a recent history of ousting the British, the Russians and the Americans from their positions of dominance. Unlike many states in the Near East and elsewhere, Iran is not a recent artificial creation of Western colonial powers, but an ancient civilisation going back to the beginning of the human race.

It is now one of the few representative democracies outside the Western world. When, in the 1950s, Mossadeq was elected Premier, the CIA helped eliminate him. When, in the 1970s, Imam Khomeini called for the restoration of democracy, and for the end of the foreign influence of the atheistic materialism of communism and capitalism, the puppet Shah persecuted the Muslim clergy and, after the Shah's flight from Iran to the US, the CIA helped assassinate many ayatollahs close to Imam Khomeini and thus created a great distrust of the West. Our friend and the Imam's friend Bani-Sadr was swept from power.

The present regime in Iran stops the Russian drive toward the Persian Gulf and inspires the Muslims of Russia and Afghanistan to oppose the Communist empire. Iran threatens the existence of the pro-Communist anti-Israeli dictatorship of Iraq. Iran challenges the rampant greed and cynicism and devaluation of culture in the world. Iran is the most populous nation of the Near East. We are blind if we do not join Israel in opening a dialogue with Iran.

Richard Bates Harris,
Park Street, Leominster, Mass.

Unbiased?

I cannot believe that Tad Tzulc's biography of Fidel Castro is unbiased. He has claimed that Battista prisons were *more humane* than are present Cuban gaolers. Haydee Santamaria was presented her brother's eyeball on a plate when she was imprisoned after the July 22, 1953, attack on the Moncada, and they threatened to remove the other one. But he had already been murdered by his gaolers. Ted Tzulc is definitely *not* a supporter of the Cuban revolution and is probably nothing but a reactionary posing as an expert.

Liz Hughes,
E 12 Street,
Homestead, Pa.

Un-neighbourly conduct

Mr Liebman's bafflement at "leftist Europeans" (Letters, Nov 30), and their un-neighbourly conduct astonishes me. Canada has been on the receiving end of American boorishness for a long time, and the trend shows no sign of abating. Recent examples include the refusal to deal with the mounting acid rain problem. Eastern Canadian forests every year show increased damage, and yet the Reagan Administration refuses to even acknowledge that a problem exists.

The Canadian Government has taken positive legislative action on the problem, and hopefully more is around the corner. But to avoid ecological catastrophe will require the cooperation of our "great friends and neighbours", the Americans, who heretofore have shown great reluctance to get their act together.

In light of these facts, one cannot but wonder where all of Mr Liebman's Americans with "superlative educations" are hiding.

Louis M. H. Belzil,
Montréal.

Cast-iron case for upending British justice

How often have we heard, in the hushed and hallowed tones of the BBC show "some documents were so sensitive that even the judge was not allowed to see them?" As a result of the independent attitude of an Australian court, we can now see the phrase as the humbug it always was — not objective BBC editorial but direct quotation from a Downing Street briefing.

Why are we in this country so supine and credulous as not to have seen earlier the disparity between the pious theory that security services must always "act within the law" and this petty device for blocking the law by sidestepping a court's authority?

Donald P. Maw,
West Bank Wynd,
Mansfield.

We are told that publication of Mr Peter Wright's book could be harmful to national security. Isn't it a little naive to suppose that an organisation which can put its chaps into key positions in our spy circus hasn't got its copy of the book already? Does Mrs Thatcher think that Ivan Gumshoff is going to queue up outside W. H. Smith?

Tom Conti,
London W1.

If, as Mrs Thatcher claims, members of MI5 have a lifetime's obligation to remain silent, couldn't somebody please get her made a member?

Janet Evans,
Milton Bryan,
Woburn, Beds.

Again, those peculiar Antipodeans and their funny, upside-down attitudes! Some Aussie judge dares upbraid Her Majesty's Government for bringing a lawsuit and then refusing to produce the evidence for it. Evidence?

But surely no member of the British judiciary would have the slightest qualms or have uttered the least complaint over such a minor point of law. Here, if the Government declares that the evidence against someone it doesn't like is too secret to show to a court, why need another word be said? A nod is as good as a wink to a blind jackass.

But these colonials have this odd idea that evidence must be *produced* in order to obtain a judgment even in matters involving national security. The word of Sir Robert Armstrong isn't *good* enough for them! Disgraceful.

And how different from the home jurisprudence of our own dear judiciary.

Ralph Estling,
Dowlish Wake,
Ilminster, Somerset.

Barbican no place for the Contras

We wholeheartedly deplore the use of the Barbican Conference Centre as venue for last week's meeting addressed by Arturo Cruz, the leader of the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO), a contra terrorist organisation that long ago abandoned military tactics in favour of the rape, murder, torture and kidnapping of innocent civilians.

Contra terrorism is common practice and well documented by organisations such as Amnesty International and AmericasWatch.

We cannot believe that a major international arts centre, with a reputation such as that of the Barbican, would wish in any way to be associated with the activities of such an organisation.

Caryl Churchill, Mary Selway, Paul Freeman, Ian Charleson, Salman Rushdie, and others.
23 Bevenden Street, London N1.

In South Africa

The current state of emergency in South Africa has been going for six months. As one who arrived in Johannesburg on the fateful day, June 12, I'd like to emphasise the continuing plight of the estimated 23,000 detained in South African gaols.

According to Dr Allen Boesak, 40 per cent of these detainees are children (under 18 years old). For them it promises to be a dark Christmas.

(Rev) **Cliff Warren**
Christian Aid, Southampton.

Welsh wails

Presents sometimes contain a hidden meaning. My wife bought me a tape of a Welsh male voice choir, which was completely incomprehensible. *After rejecting the conclusion* that it was in Welsh we discovered it had been recorded backwards, starting with the applause!

D. W. Heather,
Ruislip, Middlesex.

Yarooh!

Anent your comment on the meaning of the word "yarooh" (Leader, Nov 10). I have always believed "yarooh" meant "ouch", that is, an exclamation of pain. This could be because I attended *Black*friars School rather than Greyfriars!

Robin Griffin,
Roseneath, Wellington, NZ.

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Americans and Europeans

I refer to Mr Goldfarb's article "Why America is so foreign" and to the subsequent letters to the editor.

I have been a student in various subjects at two universities in West Germany and one in Canada, and am presently student at a US university, known to be one of the best in the country. The two years that I have stayed here were a disappointment. In most undergraduate as well as graduate courses, you are trained to function like a robot and you are examined on your ability to do so. In other words: you are getting loads of "busy work," and the faster you do that kind of work, the better.

Hanns-Andre Pitot,
State College,
PA 16801.

In the article "Why America is so foreign", Michael Goldfarb, an American expatriate who has been living in London for a year, gives an interesting commentary on the essential stupidity of what, in a bygone era, would have been termed the American proletariat. By implication, he seems to suggest that the British proletariat is somehow better educated.

May I suggest that he educate *himself* by going out into the streets and buying and then reading the "Sun," "Mirror," "Star," and any other British popular newspapers? These reflect the general educational level of the British public, (since they are freely choosing when better newspapers are available), far more accurately than American TV reflects the intelligence of the US public.

Both American TV and British newspapers illustrate to the point of absurdity the fact that education cannot make the masses what Goldfarb terms "literate". Surely the main lesson to be learned from the rise of Hitler was that literacy, Christianity, industrialisation, etc, simply do not, in the final analysis, make much difference to the way the masses react to their leaders.

R. F. Lever,
Putnam Valley,
NY.

Your leader "America baffles Europe" (Nov 9) was a timely elaboration of the generally differing attitudes and values of people on either side of the Atlantic (though, of course, there are many exceptions).

For me, this belief was reinforced this week as I watched an American television production of the film, "Blazing Saddles". In the rather unsavoury, but none-the-less amusing, scene following the ingestion of excessive quantities of baked beans, the sound was cut at the crucial moment, leaving no explanation for the cowboys' ensuing self-satisfied smiles. Within the hour, an inhaled halucinogen, or worse still "regular" tobacco, was being passed around and mock bodies were exploded many feet into the air.

This inversion of priorities would appear to point to a more deep-rooted difference in values than apparent from the merely altered pronunciation of my chosen title.

(Dr) **Clive Archer,**
Greenwich, London.

The case for an inquiry

BEFORE the decision on the future of the Nimrod disappears forever into the vortex of party politics, let's at least ask whether there are any wider issues of industrial strategy involved. The technical opinion of the RAF is, of course, vital. No one wants to buy anything that does not work. But the point is not whether the system works within the deadline set by the Government, but whether it can be made to work within a reasonable timespan now that GEC has shown signs of getting its act together. What's six months in 100 years of industrial decline?

If you were looking around the world for the hi-tech growth areas of the future in which Britain might profitability divert more resources (in order to make up for declining industries like steel, motorcycles, cars, shipbuilding, coal and so forth) then airborne radar would certainly be a prime candidate. Obviously, for the country which invented both radar and the jet engine. Not just for defence, but for the spin-off into other areas of electronics. And if you've already spent £1 billion on research and development then the importance of not taking a premature decision is patent.

If Britain withdraws now, then Boeing — which can already spread its Government-aided R and D over a large number of planes, will be left with a dominant world monopoly, with all that that implies for future prices. The cost of re-entering this market will be extremely high if not prohibitive. In order to compete with the US in aerospace, it is necessary to take a very, very long view. It is only now, decades after conception, that the European Airbus project can see the glimmers of a commercial future.

In sum, it's easy to take a decision for Britain to opt out of any one industrial sector because it is unprofitable or not quite right. But the consequence of moving out of all of them — Rolls-Royce engines, helicopters, motor manufacturing, merchant shipping et al — doesn't bear thinking about.

The alternative is to admit that 100 years of relative industrial decline cannot be cured within the timescale of a parliament. Nimrod may have let us down. But has it let us down more than the rest of industry? This Government sometimes gives the impression that it thinks so lowly of our own industries that it would be quite happy to hand as many as possible to the Americans or Japanese. That's fine, up to a point. We have made many takeover bids in the United States (though they tend not to involve core industries). The alternative is to stay with the vital industries and get them right. Fail once, fair enough, but then try again.

If Nimrod isn't, in the end, up to the job, it should be scrapped. And if it is scrapped it won't be the end of the world. Most of those displaced will be skilled workers who will readily find a job elsewhere, maybe with Plessey, Racal or one of the other companies who will profit from a Boeing's pledge to spend 130 per cent of the cost of the Boeing Awacs in the UK.

That's how badly they want the contract. But taking chips from the American table is not the same as having your own capability. At the moment we don't really know the vital industrial answers. Is the GEC camp right that, after years of procrastination (with guilt shared in unknown proportion between the company and the Ministry), it is now near to perfecting a system which could sell abroad (with interest already from Italy and Lockheed) and provide spin-off for the UK electronics industry? Would a thumbs down from the RAF look different in six months should GEC prove its point? Would the RAF's reservations seem small once the wider interests of the electronics industry are taken into account? Looking backwards, this was yet another area where, surely, a joint European approach would have been more sensible. That's just another reason why GEC's call for an independent inquiry makes industrial, if not political, sense.

Awacs v Nimrod furore

A MAJOR political controversy blew up this week with the Government's reported intention to buy the American Boeing Awacs airborne early warning system in preference to the British Nimrod aircraft jointly developed, at great expense to the taxpayer, by the state-owned British Aerospace and the General Electric Company.

Though senior Ministers refused to say anything about their intention — and the Commons was refused permission to debate it on Monday — the pressure to buy Boeing is said to have come from military advisers who claim it performs better than Nimrod, on which development costs of £900 million have already been incurred. This will have to be written off if Boeing gets the contract.

The development of Nimrod has, admittedly, taken three years longer than expected because of problems with its technical equipment. But GEC claims these have now been solved and that it has been treated shabbily in what has been one of the most bitterly contested defence procurement contracts for many years.

The chairman of GEC is Mr James Prior, a leading Tory "wet" who resigned from the Government last year after a turbulent career in Mrs Thatcher's Cabinet. He complained this week that, while he had not been allowed to see the technical assessment in favour of Boeing, the American company seemed to know everything that had been going on.

"We believe, and our experts believe, that we have met all the performance targets set for us," said Mr Prior, whose company has now appointed an independent assessor to weigh up the respective merits of the rival aircraft. Whatever conclusions are reached, however, will be too late. The Government's controversial decision was expected to be announced to MPs on the day they were to leave for the Christmas recess.

The rejection of Nimrod would cost at least 2,700 GEC jobs and would probably demolish any prospects of overseas orders for the aircraft. "It would be a vote of no confidence in British industry," said a Labour front-bench spokesman, Mr Gerald Kaufman. At least 78 MPs of all parties, led by the former Industry Secretary, Mr Cecil Parkinson, agree with him and have called on the Government to back Nimrod to protect British technology and jobs.

The whole saga bears many similarities to the sale of Westland Helicopters to an American company earlier this year in a controversy which caused the resignations of two Cabinet Ministers. The objections, now as then, were spelled out by Mr Kaufman: "Once again Mrs Thatcher is bending the knee to President Reagan. She is turning Britain into an American poodle."

Ministers evidently hope the public outcry against the deal will be muted because of Boeing's offer — some might see it as a bribe — to spend £130 in Britain for every £100 it earns from the sale of Awacs. It is claimed that this offset arrangement will create at least 4,500 jobs in the UK.

Given the heat of the controversy, critics viewed with some suspicion the timing of an announcement that the Government is to spend £225 million on buying Starstreak high-velocity anti-aircraft missiles from Shorts, the Belfast-based aircraft firm. The order will secure 1,500 jobs in Northern Ireland, create up to 9,000 jobs at contracting firms elsewhere in the UK, and also enhance the export prospects for Firestreak, a shoulder-borne missile which is the fastest of its kind in the world.

THE WEEK IN BRITAIN
by James Lewis

The jobs promised by Boeing and Shorts will not, however, compensate for the 24,000 redundancies threatened by British Telecom over the next four years. The newly-privatised firm, which made a record profit of more than £1 billion in the last six months, has been shedding labour at the rate of 5,000-6,000 a year in recent years, and that rate is to be continued.

Labour staged a 23-hour filibuster in the Commons in a vain attempt to defeat the controversial Education Bill which scraps the long-established Burnham negotiating machinery between teachers and their local authority employers and empowers the Education Secretary, Mr Kenneth Baker, to impose a pay settlement in the bitter and long-running teachers' pay dispute.

Though few people will mourn the loss of the antiquated and inefficient Burnham machinery, the Bill breaks entirely new ground in allowing a Minister to impose conditions of service on people he does not employ and, in effect, to deny them their negotiating rights. While teachers belong to what is probably the most disunited profession in the country, they are at least united in their dislike of Mr Baker's high-handedness and their resentment does not offer much hope of peace in the nation's schools.

The filibuster had the effect of knocking out a whole day's parliamentary business, including questions to the Prime Minister, which is one of the highlights of the week in the Commons. Labour's leader, Mr Neil Kinnock, was accused by Tories of engineering the whole thing so as to avoid a clash with Mrs Thatcher on defence — the subject on which both parties now base their election hopes.

Mr Kinnock's "relaunch" of his party's non-nuclear defence policy — which received a lukewarm reception in the United States the previous week — was certainly a polished affair. While its vote-winning potential remains to be seen, the Tories were worried enough to mount an orchestrated assault on it on the eve of the presentation. The theme, set out by the Conservative chairman, Mr Norman Tebbit, in New York, was that Mr Kinnock was abandoning his party's whole defence tradition in a way that would put Britain "out of Nato" and might even wreck the alliance. *(See page 4.)*

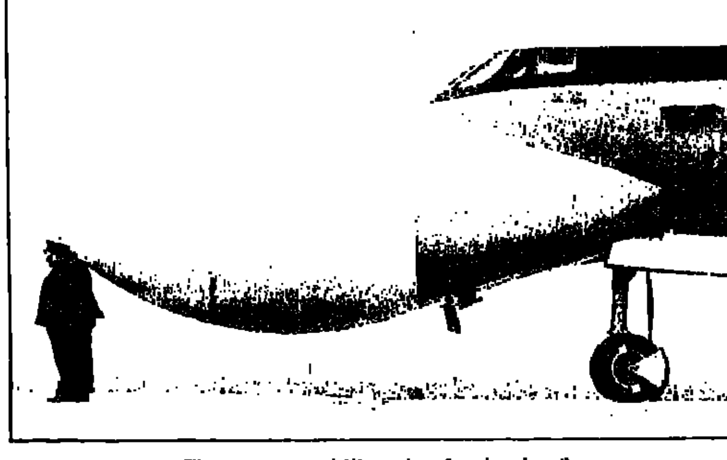
As the pre-Christmas spending spree gathered pace, the Bank of England took the unprecedented step of warning clearing banks and finance companies not to push credit and charge cards too strongly because borrowers might have difficulty in repaying. "There are certain signs of growing distress among borrowers who have overstretched themselves, attracted by the greater available of credit and easier terms," it was said.

Though Mrs Thatcher has many times voiced her distaste for the idea of living on tick, she has presided over a massive increase in personal debt which the financial institutions have only recently started to worry about. Indebtdness — embracing everything from credit cards to home loans — is now rising at more than 15 per cent a year. A city firm of stockbrokers calculated last week that personal debt will be equivalent to almost 73 per cent of household income by the end of this year, compared with only 44 per cent in 1979.end message

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling Rates December 15	Previous Closing Rates
Australia	2 1640-2 1720	2.1655-2.1680
Austria	20.30-20.33	20 34-20 37
Belgium	60.00-60.10	60 08-60.19
Canada	1 9742-1.9770	1 9672-1 9700
Denmark	10.89-10 91	10.91-10 93
France	9.44-9.46	9.46-9.48
Germany	2 88-2.89	2 88-2 89
Hong Kong	11.16-11 17	11.12-11.13
Ireland	1.0953-1 0606	1.0616-1.0626
Italy	1.997-2,003	1,996-2,001
Japan	233 70-234.10	232.69-233.07
Netherlands	3.25-3 26	3.26-3.27
Norway	10.83-10.84	10.84-10 86
Portugal	213 60-214.66	214.06-214.92
Spain	194.04-194.31	194 64-194.92
Sweden	9 96-9.97	9.95-9 96
Switzerland	2.4330-2.4368	2.42-2 43
USA	1.4320-1.4330	1.4280-1.4290
ECU	1 3845-1.3862	1.3864-1.3881

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The snoop-nosed Nimrod — for the chop?

MP in alleged MI5 plot 'must speak out'

By Alan Travis

THE Labour MP Mr Dale Campbell-Savours has written to the Conservative MP he suspects of having been involved in an alleged plot to undermine Mr Harold Wilson's government and demanded that he make a personal statement to the Commons.

The move came as pressure grew for a formal judicial inquiry into the allegations contained in Mr Peter Wright's memoirs, with the former Labour Home Secretary, Mr Merlyn Rees, saying the matter had to be cleared up to show whether he had been fooled at the time.

Mr Campbell-Savours, MP for Workington, said he did not intend to name the Tory MP, who is still sitting in the Commons. Mr Wright has alleged in his book that two Tory MPs had "acted as conduits for a smear campaign against Harold Wilson".

Mr Campbell-Savours said he had written to the MP asking him to make a personal statement before he is named when Mr Wright's memoirs are published, which he believes the Australian courts will allow.

During a Commons debate, Mr Campbell-Savours said the Wright book suggested that the two MPs had known that information for the smear campaign against Mr Harold Wilson, now Lord Wilson, had come from within MI5. "They did not stop it, nor did they report it to the Home Secretary. They just passed it on in the knowledge that it would destabilise the Prime Minister and the Labour government."

The allegation should be given credibility, argued the Labour MP, because Wright said he had been involved in the plot by 30 or so MI5 officers and that it had involved "burgling and bugging all over London".

Mr Campbell-Savours argued that a judicial inquiry was essential because even Mrs Thatcher "who was seen as a radical in some quarters" could find herself a victim of a similar character assassination campaign by the security services.

The junior Home Office minister, Mr David Waddington, had tried to rebut the allegations by referring to Mr James Callaghan's statement when he was Prime Minister in 1977. He said that an inquiry then had found no evidence of electronic surveillance of No. 10 Downing Street during Mr Wilson's premiership.

But Mr Rees demanded to know whether the Wright allegations had been covered by the 1977 inquiry. "If they were not, then surely they should be looked at again, otherwise I, at least, was fooled at that time and I want it cleared up," he said.

£1.4m jewel

A MEDIEVAL jewel found near an abbey in north Yorkshire by treasure hunters using a metal detector was sold at Sotheby's last week for £1,430,000. The 15th century gold jewel, 2½ins by 2ins, is diamond-shaped set with a sapphire, and contains engravings of the Trinity and the Nativity. A cavity in the back may have been for a communion wafer.

Archaeologist dies

PROFESSOR Glyn Daniel, the archaeologist, who became famous as a member of the 1950s television panel game, "Animal, Vegetable or Mineral?", has died aged 72. For 21 years he edited the archaeological magazine, Antiquity.

A conventional sabre-rattling challenge to Tories

By Hugo Young

MANY Labour MPs and half the Shadow Cabinet came to the great launch of Labour's defence policy last week. Would it float, or were they sunk? Mostly from the right of the party, they looked like frightened passengers not finding it easy to buy insurance. By the end they must have felt better. At least when the vessel left the slipway, the automatic pilot wasn't set head-on for the rocks.

This is because the policy is beginning to change. Or rather, its nuances are changing, and, in this strange world of anticipated government where no actual decisions can be put into effect, nuance is everything. No longer is Labour's non-nuclear policy primarily about Britain's role as a world moral leader, or the educative effects British disarmament could have on other nuclear powers. It is about something slightly more real.

The vogue words now are partnership and consultation. Mr Kinnock put heavy emphasis on this, over and over again. "We will discuss the process with our allies. That is part of our duty." It would be far better to convert policy into action through partnership rather than by "ejection".

Above all there was the matter of time. Hitherto the plain understanding has been that the entire policy, including the ejection of American nuclear bases, would be completed within a year. The most important piece of action last week was a studied distancing from this commitment.

It might take only a year to deal with the "technical" aspects of the matter, Mr Kinnock said, but the politics would take longer. The definitive statement is now said to be one Kinnock made on television two months ago, when he said that *he hoped the policy could be completed within the life of one Parliament.* The private word from the leadership is, therefore, that "there is no time limit".

We begin to see a long vista ahead, possibly one without a definite end, rather as Mr Papandreou has discovered during his discussions about the American bases in Greece. Last week Denis Healey once again committed the party to the proposition that Nato is "for the foreseeable future the only possible basis for our defence and security". For serious Nato negotiators, ready to remind a Labour government of this commitment, a large amount of leverage looms into view.

As a prelude to consultations comes a certain amount of defiant fist-waving. The United States, said Kinnock, was "not in the business of imposing weapons on its allies". We were a sovereign country. A sovereign country must act like one.

Besides, there was the priceless weapon of intelligence. Although currently painted as the enemy of both intelligence and security, the Labour leader now puts his name behind every last ounce of its importance. Washington needs everything Britain has to offer, including its own intelligence posts based here, he said. These were essential — a neat point, this — for American domestic defence, not merely for the American presence in Europe.

So quite a significant shift is being attempted. In its absolutist form of expelling American nuclear armaments, the non-nuclear policy is beginning to be presented more as an aspiration than an unalterable fact, and certainly not as a threat. We are clear what we want to achieve, Kinnock says. And these are our suggested means of achieving it. But we remain allies. We won't exactly negotiate, but we'll certainly discuss.

What we have here is the makings of a fudge. What will be its political consequences?

The first thing to note is that it is not a fudge of Wilsonian proportions. Unlike the government of Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan, a Kinnock government would not go back on the pledge to get rid of the British independent deterrent.

A consequence of the difficulties created by Kinnock's wholesale endorsement of conference policy on the bases has been to make the argument about the deterrent, once so passionate, seem quite one-sided. Getting rid of Polaris and not buying Trident now seems an innocuous policy, supported by the consensual party wisdom, and virtually no Labour politician would want to go back on it. That is an advance for clarity. It offers the certain prospect of the most radical break with the past in the history of the nuclear age.

Second, the other limb of the Labour policy, the reinforcement of conventional forces, is acquiring around it a rhetoric of support not previously heard from any Labour leadership. For the last 20 years, Labour defence policy has been a thing of such ambiguity, conducted behind such smokescreens of deception, that leaders have feared to make any ringing case for high defence spending. Both as to resources and as to strategy, the nuclear double-talk has infected all aspects of the military programme.

An ironic result of the definitive rejection of a nuclear policy has been the elevation of defence spending into a key socialist priority. To hear Kinnock talking about Exocet missiles and other wonders of modern weaponry is to be reminded that, in his anxiety to rebut the Tory claim that he is a neutralist and a quitter, he is obliged to sound like a leader who positively celebrates our tanks and frigates and all who ride in them.

He was a little nervous last week, and sometimes fluffed his words. Grand Old Man Healey sounded, as he should, more confident with the strategic talk, and is certainly a more effortless practitioner of ambiguity. But the leader is improving. If he goes on long enough counting off the missiles and the gurus (he's almost entering the Healey league as a selective name-dropper), he might even replace the actor Timothy West who, revealingly, was wheeled in to play the pseudo-statesman at the centre of the party's recent television commercial on defence.

Thirdly, there is the effect in the country. If Kinnock can go on finding the words to defuse a potential destabilisation of Nato — can go on, in effect, edging towards the prospect of some species of compromise over the bases — this effect need not be so catastrophic as is currently believed.

Thus qualified and confined, the Labour policy does, after all, raise a serious question, which cannot be disposed of for the whole of the next 12 months by slogans and smears. It is a question about means and ends, prestige and reality, credibility and disbelief. Does Kinnock strike a chord when he says that we suffer from *folie de grandeur*, and should recalibrate our defences to fit our station? Is he not somewhat persuasive when he inquires precisely which conference chambers we would be excluded from, or even enter naked, if we did not have the bomb? Were we at Reykjavik? Are we at Geneva?

Another question must be asked of the Conservatives. Again, there is time to reach beyond coarse assertion. For are they not guilty of their own kind of deception? They make a great deal of being alone, the party of defence. But after the election, if we take Labour and the Conservatives at their word, contrasting prospects present themselves.

One is of conventional forces and commitments remaining much as they are now, with the prospect of any reduction, within the present overall defence budget, postponed for at least a decade. The other is of a defence budget already going down, within which, to accommodate Trident, a slow squeeze on existing commitments seems quite inevitable.

We might have to wait for a Labour Party conference to test the credibility of the first scenario: a reason, perhaps, for Mrs Thatcher to delay the election and watch Labour once again tear themselves apart. To test the second, we could do with more frankness from the Tories here and now. Will George Younger bring himself to supply it?

Labour spells out defence policy

David Fairhall looks at the priorities

THE essence of Labour's new defence policy, published last week, is its proposal to spend the money saved by abandoning nuclear weapons on strengthening Britain's conventional forces, and to encourage Nato to put less reliance on nuclear deterrence.

This is coupled with two assertions:

- That Mrs Thatcher's government is running down our conventional defences at sea, on land and in the air, determined to buy new Trident nuclear missiles from a declining defence budget.
- That when Labour's policy is fully explained to the United States, the Americans will see it has benefits for Nato and need not harm their many conventional military bases in this country, even though US nuclear weapons will have been removed.

The document, Labour's Strategy for Defence — The Power to Defend our Country, was presented at a Press conference in London by the Labour leader, Mr Neil Kinnock, who characterised his policy as a switch from "nuclear pretence to real defence."

His defence spokesman, Mr Denzil Davies, produced graphs suggesting that by 1990, as a declining defence budget is squeezed by rising expenditure on Trident, spending on new conventional equipment will have to be cut by 30 per cent.

The shadow foreign secretary, Mr Denis Healey, argued that the Americans can be persuaded to accept Labour's policy, even the removal of cruise missiles, and that since the Reykjavik summit US policy has in any case moved in the same direction.

He said Labour strongly supported the United States' declared objective to remove all intermediate nuclear missiles from Europe (that is American cruise and Pershing II, and Soviet SS-20), to halve strategic nuclear missiles in five years, and to eliminate ballistic missiles, strategic and tactical, within a further five years.

"We are convinced we shall be able to convince our allies that the removal of cruise missiles, Poseidon submarines and nuclear bombs from Britain will not be against their interests."

"Indeed, restricting the American F-111 aircraft based in Britain to the conventional role will strengthen Nato's conventional deterrent, as will the military resources freed by our decision to cancel Polaris and Trident."

The policy document says: "In our own national defences, the present Government is presiding over a serious decline in the strength of all our armed forces. Had the invasion of the Falklands by the Argentine junta come even six months later than it did, it is doubtful that we could have regained the islands.

"Nato's strategy is also being called into question. As long as the Soviet Union poses a potential military threat to Western Europe, we need a strong Nato. But its reliance on the threat to use American nuclear weapons in response to a conventional attack can no longer be sustained.

"We know, in the light of Chernobyl and research into 'nuclear winter,' how the use of nuclear weapons could destroy populations and military forces on all sides. What enemy will believe that the Americans will commit suicide to punish an invader of Western Europe in these circumstances?"

Setting the scene for its own policy, the Labour document elaborates "the bitter paradox" of a Conservative government claiming to be strong on defence while presiding over a decline in military expenditure of 6 per cent in real terms, after allowing for inflation, over the three years to 1988-89.

According to Labour's analysis, this reduction, combined with the cost of Mrs Thatcher's "nuclear fixation," means several things:

- For the Royal Navy — fewer frigates (a loss of at least three over the next decade), only partial replacement of the amphibious forces for the Royal Marines, a probable reduction in diesel-electric submarines from 13 to 8, and fewer support vessels.
- For the Royal Air Force — no money yet for the European Fighter Aircraft, delays in ordering a new helicopter, and postponement of a second order of Harrier GR5s.
- For the Army — cuts in training and equipment, possible loss of an anti-tank missile, scatterable mines, an electronic warfare system and tank improvements.

The forces are in this position, according to Labour, because of the Government's determination to spread limited resources across too many commitments.

"Britain's defences now urgently need to be restructured to meet modern demands," the document says.

It accuses the Government not only of running down national defences but of failing to tackle the mounting strains in the Nato alliance, arising from a divergence between the States' worldwide security interests and the narrower problem of defending Europe.

Would the Americans risk Washington for London, or Chicago for Hamburg? it asks, and it casts doubt on the Nato strategy of "flexible response," which relies on the residual threat of nuclear conflict if Europe's conventional defences were collapsing.

The need for change has been accentuated, Labour argues, by scientific evidence that most of those left alive after a full-scale nuclear attack on the UK — estimated to have killed 29 million people — would later be killed in the cold and starvation of a "nuclear winter." Yet nuclear weapons continued to proliferate, including some apparently intended for fighting and winning a supposedly "limited" war in Europe.

Labour's alternative approach "is founded upon the plain fact that in our national defence the probability of a potential aggressor being defeated is diminishing because of Britain's declining conventional forces, and because of Nato's over-emphasis on nuclear weapons".

In national terms, the policy document wants defence commitments restructured to put money where it is needed most.

A commitment to the Falklands is included in Labour's list. Britain was right to fight to recover the islands from Argentina, the document says, but Mrs Thatcher's Fortress Falklands policy is quite unacceptable.

The most important step was cancelling "the appallingly expensive Trident programme" — a fleet of four new Trident ballistic missile submarines to replace the Polaris nuclear deterrent force.

"So, we will cancel Trident; and we will decommission the ageing Polaris. In doing so we will not only release money which we will devote to strengthening our conventional forces, but we will also remove the imbalances and distortions that Trident causes.

"We will, for example, be able to restore the commitment to a 50-warship Navy; we will build the European Fighter Aircraft; and we will restore the standards of equipment and training of the British Army in Germany as part of the strengthening of conventional forces along the central front."

For Nato, the Labour policy envisages two changes, neither sufficient on its own: ending the reliance on nuclear weapons and enhancing Nato's conventional strength.

The allied strategy of threatening the first use of nuclear weapons is unworkable, it argues, yet provokes an excuse for not enhancing conventional strength.

"That is why it is our intention to cancel Trident, decommission Polaris and remove all American nuclear weapons in this country. Only by doing so will we be believed when we argue for less reliance on nuclear weapons.

"Everything we do will involve consultation with our allies," Labour promises.

"And far from incensing the Americans, at the heart of our policy is just what they so often call for: that Europe should play a greater part in its own defence . . ."

Labour's contribution to Nato's conventional deterrence would, besides switching national resources from nuclear weapons, include working for more efficient procurement policies in the alliance, reversing the trend towards "unnecessarily sophisticated and extremely expensive weaponry" in favour of simpler, cheaper weapons.

As a first step, Labour would propose withdrawing all nuclear and chemical weapons from a 150-kilometre corridor on either side of the Iron Curtain.

It would call for more use of reserves, as in Scandinavia and Switzerland, and for more use of defensive weaponry and barriers — although Mr Kinnock emphasised at his press conference yesterday that there would always be a need to attack air bases and other targets behind an enemy's lines.

The policy confronts the fear of nuclear blackmail, which it describes as fallacious.

"It has long been clear — as the disaster of Chernobyl horrifyingly demonstrated — that the spread of radioactive contamination would make the use of nuclear weapons largely self-defeating."

Turning finally to the view of Washington, the document points out that its proposals are nowhere near as radical as the French decision in 1967 to withdraw from Nato's integrated military structure which meant moving the headquarters from Paris to Brussels.

"Because our policies are not aimed at harming American interest or at getting rid of the American conventional forces in Britain, there is no practical reason why they should not work constructively with the policy of modernising Nato strategy. . . . We accept that both the US and the Soviet Union will want to maintain a minimum second-strike capability as long as the other does.

"But since both Mr Reagan and Mr Gorbachev agreed at Reykjavik that their aim was to secure the abolition of nuclear weapons, we consider that there are grounds for hope that the maintenance of nuclear strike capabilities by the superpowers will be a transient phase.

"In the meantime, we are seeking a policy of 'no first use' of nuclear weapons by Nato and removal of them from Europe."

Safety shutdown threat to Sellafield

By Paul Brown

SAFETY at Sellafield, in west Cumbria, is still well below the standards expected for the nuclear industry, according to a report by the Health and Safety Executive, published last week. It said that if significant advances were not made in a year the HSE would order the closure of the reprocessing plant until safety was improved.

Mr John Rimington, the director-general of the HSE, said British Nuclear Fuels had failed to keep radiation doses to workers as low as reasonably achievable, which was its statutory duty.

The HSE was also altering the licence conditions for the site so that there was a regular shutdown for essential maintenance, improvements and safety. Mr Remington said the report was designed as "a major jolt to the management."

The report noted that despite many improvements since its last highly critical report on Sellafield in 1981 some faults had still not been rectified. Mr Rimington said a tougher stand would be taken this time. The report's findings were not recommendations but were instructions which would have to be carried out, or parts of the plant would be shut.

The safety audit concentrated on the older buildings at BNFL, particularly the reprocessing plant for Magnox fuel, some of which are 30 years old.

The report says that in the reprocessing control room, which monitors what is going on in the plant, so many modifications had been made over the years that there was no longer a clear picture of what was going on in the works.

The report says: "The condition of the plant seems to have been subordinated to the requirements of current production, is unsatisfactory and demands planned new investment to enable it to perform for a further 10 years and beyond without unnecessary hazard to workers, and in the extreme to the public."

Even if all 11 British Magnox stations were shut down immediately it would still take 10 years to reprocess all the spent fuel in store. Many millions of pounds will now have to be spent by BNFL to modernise the plant.

The standards achieved at Sellafield were not up to those of the chemical industry or other parts of the nuclear industry. Management and staff were cutting corners and were careless of their own safety, the report says. Production in the plant was being resumed after each annual shut-down without the full schedule of work being completed — even some priority work.

The HSE has told BNFL that it has to prove the plant is safe to justify its continued operation of reprocessing. Technical support groups responsible for the revision of working instructions and safety were seriously undermanned.

The inspectors did not look at the military reactor at Sellafield and only had a brief look at some of the older buildings. There were a large number of abandoned or party-used buildings, many contaminated and presenting a potential hazard with leaks. They required constant vigilance, which was not being given.

Analysis of the equipment in the reprocessing plant showed that 52 per cent was in good or satisfactory state, 31 per cent tolerable, and 17 per cent substandard. Pipelines for transfers between buildings which were unsatisfactory in 1981 still showed signs of inattention.

The 12-man team of inspectors from the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate acknowledged that some of BNFL's problems could not be solved until the problems of getting rid of nuclear waste had been solved.

In a statement, BNFL said it would respond positively to the report's findings. A number of specific requirements had already been tackled.

As the report indicated, high priority had been given to development of new plants, including reduced radioactive discharges to the sea. "The company accepts that it is now timely to deploy more resources on improving older operating plants on the site and on decommissioning," BNFL said.

Shultz condemns Labour

By David McKie and Hella Pick

THE US Secretary of State, Mr George Shultz, joined the condemnation of Labour's non-nuclear defence policy. Speaking at a press conference after a Nato meeting in Brussels, he said unilateral nuclear disarmament would be a catastrophe if implemented.

Mr Shultz said he would not normally comment on an internal political argument in another country, but he asked: "Why in the world would we put ourselves in a position where the Soviet Union can look down our throats and tell us where to go because they are heavily armed and we have thrown our arms away? It makes no sense at all."

The Nato alliance has opted for Mrs Thatcher's more limited prescription for arms reduction instead of the total ban on nuclear weapons briefly mooted at the Reykjavik summit of the two superpowers. The Nato ministerial council has also given President Reagan a stronger vote of confidence than he now enjoys in the United States.

Mr Shultz assured other Nato foreign ministers that the Iran arms affair would not stand in the way of a vigorous foreign policy.

The Nato foreign ministers were clearly determined to say nothing to Mr Shultz that might rock the boat of Alliance unity by questioning the US Administration's credibility as the arms scandal continues to unfold. Widespread concern was voiced in private conversations, but it never surfaced even during the restricted meetings at the council.

There was scarcely a hint of criticism that the United States had abandoned the Salt II treaty, despite Allied advice not to do so. Nor was concern expressed over Washington's refusal to contemplate further superpower summits.

Mr Shultz presented an optimistic assessment of the prospects for nuclear arms control negotiations with the Russians. But he did not discuss how to break the deadlock over space weapons, which broke up the Reykjavik meeting.

The Nato council communiqué declared Alliance pressure for the more cautious approach to arms control priorities that Mrs Thatcher set out during her visit to Camp David last month.

The communiqué underlined the need to maintain the nuclear component in the Alliance strategy on deterrents. It recommended a 50 per cent cut in US and Soviet strategic offensive forces and omitted any reference to the elimination of ballistic nuclear missiles over a 10-year period, as envisaged by Mr Reagan at Reykjavik.

Spain issues bases ultimatum

By Hella Pick

SPAIN has warned that it will close all US military bases unless Washington agrees to reduce its military presence in the country.

The Spanish Foreign Minister, Mr Francesco Fernandez Ordonez, confronted the US Secretary of State, Mr George Shultz, over US reluctance to renegotiate the agreement covering US bases in Spain on terms acceptable to the Spanish Government.

The Spanish intervention at the Nato ministerial council in Brussels, followed angry, inconclusive exchanges earlier between the US Defence Secretary, Mr Caspar Weinberger and his Spanish counterpart during a Nato defence ministers' meeting there.

Mr Felipe Gonzalez, the Spanish Prime Minister won a referendum approving Spain's membership of Nato earlier this year, only after promising to secure a reduction of the US military presence in Spain.

Three rounds of talks have seen American negotiators try to link the US presence to overall Nato commitments, while Spain has insisted that the matter falls under a bilateral agreement signed in 1953, 29 years before it joined the Alliance.

Mr Ordonez warned Mr Shultz that the 1953 agreement would not be renewed when it expired in May, 1988, unless the United States accepted significant troop reductions.

THE WEEK

MORE than 120 people have died in the Pakistani city of Karachi as rival Pashtun and Mohajir communities clashed in riots sparked off by police action against drug smugglers.

The violence erupted on Sunday when Pashtuns from north west Pakistan and Afghanistan went on an orgy of shooting, stabbing and burning in the suburb of Orangi Town. The attacks were apparently in reaction to a government drive to seize drugs and weapons from the predominantly Pashtun suburb of Sohrab Goth and transfer at least 25,000 Afghan refugees out of the city.

Pashtuns and Mohajirs, immigrants from other parts of India at partition in 1947, have a history of violent rivalry in Karachi. At least 58 people were killed when the two communities clashed last month.

AT least 65 people were feared dead after an Aeroflot TU-134 airliner, on a flight from Minsk, crashed in woods near Schoenefeld Airport outside East Berlin. Most of the 73 passengers were understood to be East Germans.

A FORMER Gaullist minister and leading rightwing spokesman, Mr Alain Peyrefitte, survived an assassination attempt when his car exploded outside his home in Provins, 50 miles east of Paris. A local mechanic was killed in the blast.

Interior Minister Charles Pasqua suggested that it might have been the work of the extreme leftwing terrorist organisation, Action Directe.

A Gaullist MP and Mayor of Provins, Mr Peyrefitte also writes an influential column for the rightwing newspaper, Le Figaro.

TROOPS imposed an uneasy calm on the Zambian copperbelt as riots erupted in the troubled mining region and dozens of shops were looted.

Unconfirmed reports put the number of deaths from four days of rioting at 13. The Government gave a figure of five dead.

The disturbances wre ignited by a 120 per cent rise in the price of refined maize meal, one of Zambia's staple foods. This followed the removal of government subsidies on maize under an International Monetary Fund economic programme.

AT least 25 people died in Sri Lanka at the weekend as militant Tamil separatist groups battled for control of the northern and eastern provinces. The fighting began when the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam attacked camps of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front.

A SENIOR West German Defence Ministry official, with access to long-term military planning and the defence force's computer network, has been arrested in Bonn on suspicion of spying for East Germany.

The Government claimed that the 48-year-old civil servant, Juergen Westphal, in the ministry's central policy staff department had been watched by military counter-intelligence and arrested before he was able to betray any secrets to East Germany.

BRITAIN sought an urgent meeting with the Iranian authorities after receiving reports that a British businessman, Roger Cooper, gaoled in Tehran for a year, had been charged with espionage. Mr Cooper is being held at Tehran's Evin maximum security prison.

Last week the Foreign Office told the newly-appointed Iranian chargé d'affaires in London, Mr Akhondzade Basti, that his mission would be adversely affected unless there was a quick solution to the Cooper affair.

Mr Cooper's family began a campaign for his release at the weekend, accusing the British Government of doing little to obtain his release.

THE PLO has agreed to an immediate ceasefire at Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camps, which have been under siege by the Shi'ite Muslim Amal militia for 11 weeks. At least 700 people have been killed in the fighting.

MORE than 30,000 people demonstrated against chemical pollution of the Rhine, forming human chains down its banks, blocking bridges, and paralysing traffic.

MR OTIENO MAK'ONYANGO, a Kenyan journalist detained more than four years ago, was freed from prison last week, on the 23rd anniversary of the country's independence.

SOUTH AFRICA'S latest press curbs were imposed to forestall terror attacks planned by the outlawed African National Congress during Christmas and the New Year, President P. W. Botha told the nation on television last week.

The Commissioner of Police General Johan Coetzee, announced that police had arrested alleged ANC members and sympathisers after obtaining information that they were planning to launch acts of "destruction and mutilation".

In his television address Mr Botha outlined details of the attacks which he said were planned by the ANC-SA Communist Party "terrorist alliance" for December and 1987. He spoke of ANC-SACP structures in South Africa's neighbourning states, charging that they controlled "units of murderers in South Africa", and of people and organisations in South Africa — "especially the United Democratic Front" — who allowed themselves to be "misused and misguided by the forces of terror".

Even tighter press curbs in South Africa

By David Beresford in Johannesburg

SOUTH AFRICA last week introduced its most far-reaching clampdown on the press to date. It was immediately met by an equally unprecedented wave of protest from abroad and from a spectrum of political and religious opinion in the country.

The country's major black political organisation, the United Democratic Front, said the Government had "gone mad," and added that it was preparing immediate legal challenges to the regulation.

The leader of the white parliamentary opposition, Mr Colin Eglin, said the restrictions "in effect pronounced the death sentence on press freedom in South Africa."

A spokesman for the Anglican church, Bishop John Carter, said that only "authoritarian regimes of the worst kind that are afraid to let people know what is happening" would resort to such measures.

The leader of the neo-nazi Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), Mr Eugene TerreBlanche, said the restrictions affected "the very core of individual freedom" and proved "the Government cannot maintain order in South Africa."

The regulations, promulgated by government gazette with effect from 10.30am on December 11, brought several new dimensions to existing restrictions on the media, including:

- A requirement to submit articles to the Government for pre-publication censorship if they contain information or comment about a variety of aspects of "unrest".
- A blanket prohibition on the publication of reports about the detention, treatment, or release of detainees being held under the emergency. This follows a string of allegations of maltreatment and torture of child detainees.
- A ban on the publication of evidence given in court about the treatment of a detainee in detention, until judgment has been given in the case. The effect of this may be that where the Government settles a civil action relating to assault or torture out of court — as happens regularly — the supporting affidavits will not be publishable unless the settlement is made an order of court.
- Prohibition of blank spaces in newspapers, deletions of obliterations signalling to readers that information has been left out of an article because of the restrictions are outlawed.
- The prohibition of a wide range of reports dealing with consumer, rent and education boycotts as well as illegal strikes. This includes a bar on the "encouragement" of such boycotts and disclosure of details as to whether they are successful and whether they are accompanied by intimidation.
- A bar on the reporting of a variety of details about alternative local government structures — eventually aimed at preventing publicity being given to the "street committees" which have become increasingly influential in the townships.
- A ban on the disclosure of information about "restricted" gatherings, including the time and place where they are held, their purpose and any speeches made at them. A restricted gathering is one which has been prohibited, or on which conditions have been set such as a limit to the numbers attending.
- A prohibition on statements discrediting or undermining compulsory military service.

In addition, several restrictions previously imposed on journalists but diluted or struck out by court rulings have been reimposed.

Powers have been granted to ministers and the Commissioner of Police to confiscate publications which are in breach of the regulations. Importantly, however, this power is not discretionary, as the grounds for seizure can be challenged in the courts.

A blanket prohibition on the publication of "news comment" about any security force action has been reimposed. The definition of the security forces has been extended to include "municipal" policemen, who have been accused of a number of atrocities in recent months.

Journalists have been banned from attending any scene of unrest. A prohibition has been imposed on the photographing or filming of security force actions; of "unrest"; or "of any damage, or destroying property, or injured or dead persons, or other visible signs of violence" at the scene of such action.

Penalties for breaches of the regulations are a maximum of 20,000 rand (nearly £7,000) or 10 years' imprisonment.

The most striking departure from previous censorship in South Africa is the requirement that the reports dealing with certain aspects of "unrest" — including security force actions, boycotts, the treatment of detainees and the creation of alternative local government structures — should be submitted to government for clearance.

Britain condemned the imposition of the new censorship regulations. "We deplore these restrictions on press freedom in South Africa. They are entirely contrary to the Western values that the South African Government claims to espouse," a Foreign Office statement said.

But still not completely silenced

By David Beresford in Johannesburg

ON the first floor of a grubby, three-storey building in downtown Johannesburg there was that sense of controlled panic familiar to newsrooms around the world, but to none more than those in South Africa.

Fourteen pages of the 28-page Weekly Mail had already been laid out and they had just received the details of the most far-reaching press restrictions yet promulgated in the country. On one side of the room editor Anton Harber was hunched over page-proofs with his lawyer, frantically scanning the Government Gazette and copy in search of possible breaches — a single one of which could be punished by a term of imprisonment for Harber and a fine big enough to wreck the publication.

A full-page spread headed "Why are activists murdering activists?" was causing problems. One of the writers anxiously leant over the lawyer, asking: "Isn't that subversive . . . enhance the striking capacity of the liberation forces . . . direct their justified anger against the Pretoria regime . . .?" The lawyer shook his head: It was not specific enough to be subversive. But other paragraphs were spotted which were in breach of the regulations. The problem was how to fill the spaces — the regulations had now prohibited white spaces, or "boxes" indicating censorship.

After an hour's debate less than a dozen offending paragraphs had been pulled out and the problem of the empty spaces resolved in principle. They would be filled with the words: "For further information telephone your minister." A reporter began preparing a list of work and home telephone numbers of the Cabinet and senior government officials, including the head of the country's secret service.

The scene in the Weekly Mail said much about the latest clampdown. Importantly it showed that the South African press has not been silenced . . . yet. Less than half a dozen paragraphs in 14 pages — four of them news pages — is less than all-embracing censorship. And the spirit in which the telephone numbers of officialdom were being slotted into page one made it clear that the flame of journalistic defiance — in the tradition of Thomas Pringle, Anthony Sampson, Laurence Gandar, Donald Woods and Tony Heard — still flickers in South Africa.

It is beyond doubt that the new restrictions will have a major impact on public awareness of what is happening in the country, as a glance through recent stories out of South Africa quickly shows:

The death of an 11-year-old boy and the wounding of five others in Soweto township on November 5 — the "Guy Fawkes day shootings" — will be reportable, but not the allegations that the gunmen were police randomly opening fire from a hijacked bus on a bunch of kids playing in the street.

That horrendous account by the detainees' parents support committee on the plight of children in detention — including related allegations of child abuse and torture by interrogators — will now be unreportable.

The double murder of Robert Sobukwe's sister and her husband, Dr and Florence Ribeiro, could be published, but the involvement of a security branch car would not.

And then there was a story on page 6 of the early editions of the Star — South Africa's biggest daily newspaper — containing allegations by an 11-year-old boy just released from detention who said: "They put a dummy into my mouth, and the dummy had wires connected to it. The wires were connected to a socket in the wall and when . . ." But time has run out, both for the Star and this correspondent. In the final edition of the Star, published after the Government Gazette, the child's story had been replaced by: "Hail, rain and wind lash West Rand". And this article, published even later, will have to leave it to the reader's imagination as to what new meaning a child's dummy might have.

But although such stories are obviously horrific there is perhaps something more to be read into the latest press clamps than mere government guilt and embarrassment at such happenings and a desire to cover-up.

First of all it is noteworthy that the restrictions, draconian though they undoubtedly are, do not go quite as far as had been feared by the media. Most importantly their implementation is subject to judicial review, in that there is no provision — as there was in the original regulations, published in June — for ministerial discretion. Newspapers can be confiscated, but not at the whim of a politician or the head of the police: there has to be clear evidence of a breach of the regulations and, if it is not there, the seizure is open to legal challenge.

The widely-rumoured steps directed specifically at foreign correspondents have not materialised. In fact there are hints in the presentation of the restrictions that the authorities may not be as concerned as previously about overseas reports — which would support at least the impression, which the government (suspiciously) has been assiduously cultivating, that it no longer gives a damn for international opinion.

But otherwise there is a steely determination to be found in the formulation of the regulations. They have obviously been drawn up carefully by the government's legal advisers with a determination that they should be both highly effective and impervious to legal challenge. But effective against what, if not foreign opinion?

One answer is to be found in the townships, and those new regulations banning publication of details of illegal strikes, education, rent and consumer boycotts and stayaways. Those prohibitions come in the wake of the national rent boycotts, which have already proved crippling to local government, and in anticipation of an escalation of township rebellion in weeks to come, in the form of a previously announced "Christmas against the emergency campaign," with the 25th anniversary of Umkonto We Sizwe — military wing of the outlawed African National Congress — this week and the 75th anniversary of the ANC itself in early January.

A second, possible answer — and one potentially more ominous — lies in the restrictions on those stories, recalled above, of allegations of brutality in detention and murder on the streets. A South African spy, Craig Williamson, made the remark some time ago on British television that South Africa had not yet resorted to "the football stadium solution" in dealing with black rebellion. Earlier this year the state President, Mr P. W. Botha, intervened in a court action in Namibia to prevent the prosecution of members of the security forces who had been charged with beating a black suspect to death during interrogation. The morality is there. Is it now the "solution" to a revolution? The answer is not certain. But the question has to be asked.

North briefed British on Libya targets

By Alex Brummer in Washington

LIEUTENANT Colonel Oliver North, the man at the centre of the covert US-Iran arms dealings, briefed British officials in the basement of the White House on bombing targets in Tripoli and Benghazi on the night of the US raids on Libya on April 15.

The briefing, dealing with the most significant US retaliation to date against international terrorism, is said to reflect the unusually close relationship which existed in allied counter-terrorism efforts between British officials and the Anglophile Colonel North.

Although Colonel North was merely one of four deputy directors for policy development and political-military affairs at the National Security Council, he was a highly rated figure in British military and diplomatic circles in Washington and frequented dinner parties given by senior British military staff. He was seen at the embassy as an important conduit to the top echelons at the White House, although he is said to have exaggerated his ease of access to the President.

The presence of British officials in the White House basement on the night of the Libyan raids indicates far greater British knowledge of the operation, in particular the likely targets, than has generally been conceded. With F-111 bombers taking off from US bases in Britain there was strong concern within the British Government that the loss of life should be minimised. Mrs Thatcher paid a high price in domestic popularity for her cooperation, against what was almost certainly her own better judgment.

In London the Foreign Office, asked to comment on the report, pointed out the words used by the Prime Minister in the Commons soon after the raid, when she said that President Reagan's request to use British-based bombers led to "a series of exchanges".

An official added: "Given the nature of the operation, the Government was in contact and close touch with the Americans. The nature of these contacts must necessarily remain confidential."

Sources in Washington say that British officials discussed specific bombing targets with Colonel North with a view to reducing casualties during the American retaliatory raids. It was emphasised that the raids should be precision bombings, aimed at saving lives. Given the use of bases in Britain it would have been ridiculous for the UK not to have been consulted on targeting.

Colonel North's close relationship with the British foreign affairs and defence establishment in Washington dates back to the Falklands war, when he was a key link between the White House and London. The colonel, who greatly enjoys the company of British officials, was well known at the embassy and also proud of his own English antecedents. He has been known to proclaim himself a descendant of Lord North, George III's hapless Prime Minister who lost the 13 colonies.

Colonel North was a welcome figure at private British diplomatic functions, where he would hold forth publicly on sensitive matters of foreign policy. On one occasion, dining at the table of the British naval attaché, Captain David Hart-Dyke, commander of a vessel sunk during the Falklands conflict, he mesmerised guests with a vivid description of his own role in easing President Ferdinand Marcos out of the Philippines on a US plane.

He told fellow guests tales of the special arrangements he made for transporting the Marcos family and their jewellery and wealth from Manila to US soil. He left the distinct impression that without his personal flair the dictator may have lingered longer in his palace.

These accounts of his own importance as a driving force behind American foreign policy, eagerly taken up by the US right wing, contrast with those of White House officials.

They have descibed "Ollie" North as a "figure prone to exaggeration, who didn't have all this contact and rapport. There was a dream-world quality to him, in which things were bigger than reality."

Casey, Regan also to go

By Alex Brummer in Washington

THE first lady of the US, Mrs Nancy Reagan, has told friends that the White House Chief of Staff, Mr Donald Regan, and the CIA director, Mr William Casey, will leave the US government by early January as a result of their roles in Iran arms scandal, it was reported last week.

Mrs Reagan's developing role in helping President Reagan to come to grips with the expanding "Irangate" affair was officially confirmed by the White House, which said that the former presidential adviser, Mr Michael Deaver, had met the Reagans and a group of elder political statesmen. Mr Donald Regan was excluded from the gathering, although he learned of the meeting as it was taking place or soon afterwards.

The New York Times quoted Mrs Reagan as telling friends that she expects "Mr Regan to be gone by early January". She also reportedly said that Mr Casey would be gone around the same time. Mr Regan is seen as vulnerable whichever way the investigations turn out. If he knew nothing about the affair he failed his President as chief of staff; and if he knew, he is as culpable as those who have already left, Lieutenant-Colonel North and Admiral Poindexter.

Among the wise men called to the White House to counsel the Reagans were the former Democratic Party chief, Mr Robert Strauss; the former Secretary of State, Mr William Rogers; and the retired Republican Sentate majority leader, Mr Howard Baker. Mr Speakes said that the participants in the meeting discussed "the current situation" regarding the arms sales to Iran and the Contra funding exercise.

After three successive days of testimony on Capitol Hill Mr Casey has become a central target of Administration critics because of his role in the affair. Mr Casey has told Congress that he was "misled" by Colonel North and Admiral Poindexter when he asked them about a diversion of funds in October — six weeks before the public unveiling by Mr Meese.

It was also reported that Mr Casey encouraged the White House in the summer of 1985 to pursue an Iranian initiative by providing an intelligence evaluation which supported Israeli claims that moderates in Tehran were willing to open talks with the US.

Communist rebels swap to posters

Philippines ceasefire — but rebels keep arms

By Greg Jones in Manila

COMMUNIST rebels joined celebrations and peace rallies around the Philippines last week as a 60-day ceasefire between the Government and the New People's Army went into effect. For some rebels, the truce offered the first opportunity in 17 years of fighting to resurface legally.

In many cities, rebel leaders and guerrillas gave interviews on radio stations, and later appeared at peace rallies sponsored by leftwing and Catholic groups.

In Iloilo City, on the central island of Panay, Mrs Concha Araneta, a Communist official, pledged strict adherence to the ceasefire. Mrs Araneta also appealed for guerrillas to trust the Government and armed forces to honour the agreement. Monsignor Arturo Piamonte, the Bishop of Iloilo, described the ceasefire as "an answer to the prayers" of Filipinos.

Military officials, however, viewed the ceasefire more sceptically. Brigadier-General D. T. Rio, the regional commander of several central island provinces warned rebels in a radio statement against carrying firearms in populated centres.

The Philippines armed forces chief, General Fidel Ramos, later accused Communist guerrillas of using the truce to further their quest for power. "We have seen countries in our region . . . that have been overrun because of this pattern of revolutionary warfare which consists of fight, talk, fight, talk," General Ramos said.

The army chief expressed anger about armed rebels' carefully-staged march into a Bataan province town on Wednesday, about 50 miles west of the capital. General Ramos said the rebel parade and rally was a "provocative incident". The region's military commander said the guerrilla march, in which they brandished firearms, violated the ceasefire agreement.

US nuclear plant to be closed

By Michael White in Washington

HALFWAY around the world from Chernobyl the stricken Soviet nuclear reactor has claimed its most spectacular victim. In a decision redolent with cold war ironies the US Department of Energy has been forced to impose a six month shut-down on the American reactor most like Chernobyl-4. It is a military one and its function is to produce much of the plutonium for the nuclear weapons America points at the Soviet Union.

The decision to spend an urgent $50 million improving safety systems and procedures at the ageing N reactor at the Hanford nuclear reservation at Richland, Washington in the Pacific north-west, is alarming the 10,000 workers whose local prosperity depends on it. They fear it will not re-open. That suspicion is not shared by environmentalists and peaceniks who have long campaigned against a record of "widespread complacency" which included no less than 2,800 pounds of plutonium unaccounted for even a decade ago.

Hanford's critics say it is already the largest nuclear waste tip in the world. Nonetheless it is on the short-list to become home for 77,000 tons of long-term waste — with a half-life longer than man's history on the planet.

Hanford is a remnant of the race to build the bomb in world war II. Chosen two days after the first self-sustaining nuclear reaction had been achieved in 1942, 1,500 farmers were evicted two months later and 50,000 construction workers brought in. Secrecy and the claims of national security ensured that only now is proper evaluation being made of a cavalier attitude towards the risks. In 1949, for example, they deliberately released a radioactive cloud — 5,000 curies of iodine 131 — over Washington and Oregon in an experiment to locate the new Soviet plutonium plants.

The plant was in trouble long before Chernobyl with Congress, local politicians and newspapers like Portland's The Oregonian hammering away at it. In May 1985 when Governor Booth Gardner toured the site, he later discovered, signs warning against contaminated soil were hidden. Suspensions occurred and contractors were replaced, but unlike civil nuclear plants which are monitored by the not-always-robust Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) military plants are run, unsupervised, by the Department of Energy (DoE) itself. It is no longer a comforting arrangement.

Six independent experts after Chernobyl put an unwelcome spotlight on graphite-moderated reactors — especially since Hanford also lacks a steel and concrete containment structure. Last weekend two of the six experts recommended its immediate and permanent closure and all six said the 23-year-old plant, designed to last 20 years, could not be run safely beyond the 1990s. Though judged safer than Chernobyl, its reactor building was designed only to withstand 5lb of pressure psi (against 50 for the modern US civil plant and 25 at Chernobyl) and years of radiation have caused its graphite blocks and the metal tubes which hold the fuel to expand. By 1995, says one official estimate, the graphite blocks will have grown the last five inches and start breaking up the overhead shielding.

But the Reagan Administration says bluntly that it cannot afford to lose this "key source" in the process which turns uranium ore liquefied in Gore, Oklahoma, into plutonium at Hanford or an equally controversial plant at Savannah River, South Carolina, ready for the bomb factories at Amarillo, Texas. In 1981, it began a drive, both to replace and modernise its 25,000 nuclear warheads and to build a stockpile of plutonium. The budget has more than quadrupled.

The fate of N reactor is not the only shadow over the area. The arid and (relatively) isolated 570 square mile site on the Columbia River, 240 miles upstream from bustling Portland, has emerged from a dirty round of political infighting known as "nimby" ("not in my backyard") as one of three short-listed finalists to become the US's major high-level nuclear waste dump.

Hanford locals are convinced they were being set up to be awarded the lucrative $25 billion poisoned chalice. Their suspicion is enhanced by another campaign being run by the DoE to terminate the historic separation of military from civil nuclear programmes so that weapon-fuelling plutonium 239 can also be extracted from the spent fuel of civil plants. "The USSR is not constrained using only defence-dedicated reactors" a top official recently complained. If Congress would come up with the $6 billion needed to replace N reactor and also fund the waste dump there with new rules the DoE could kill two birds with one stone. And, say sceptics, a lot more fish in the Columbia River too.

Israel tries to counter Arab nerve gas threat

By Ian Black in Jerusalem

ISRAEL is becoming increasingly concerned by the development of chemical weapons by its Arab enemies. It is especially worried by Syria, which is known to be producing and stockpiling several varieties, including deadly nerve gas, which can be delivered by artillery shells, bombs, and accurate long-range ground-to-ground missiles.

A series of recent statements by Israeli leaders and articles in a wide variety of official and unofficial publications suggests that the country's defence establishment has decided to improve chemical warfare counter-measures, heighten public awareness of the problem, publicly criticise its enemies, and try to stem supplies of raw materials needed for the weapons.

The Israeli army has been equipping its combat troops with gas masks since 1967 and, although the anti-chemical effort only began earlier this year, it is already widely known that protective clothing is now used in routine military and civil defence exercises. The medical corps has recently produced a special pill to protect soldiers from the effects of nerve gas poisoning.

Every soldier, the army has made public, is now equipped with a personal anti-gas and chemical and biological warfare kit, including respirator mask, protective clothing, and syringes to be used in case of injury. Air filter and purification systems have been installed in many armoured vehicles. Training, which began in earnest about nine months ago, is also to be intensified.

According to the Israeli Defence Force Journal, an official Israeli army publication, "efforts are being made to convince soldiers and commanders of the reality of the threat."

"In addition, the IDF is equipping itself with defensive equipment, not only for personal defence, but also to defend those weapons which may be affected."

Defensive measures, according to Brigadier-General Yosef Eyal, commander of the Engineering Corps, "are among the best in the world," although foreign observers say the Israelis have not yet acquired the expertise of Nato armies. Attempts to buy British equipment have foundered because of the embargo imposed after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

But training and equipping soldiers may be the easy part. "They're training the troops who are going to be operating in a chemical environment at the front," one Western military attaché, said. "But their real concern is about what could happen if chemical weapons were used against their rear." A Syrian SS21, armed with a chemical warhead and fired from the Golan Heights, could wreak havoc in Tel Aviv or elsewhere in Israel's densely populated coastal strip.

The Defence Minister, Mr Yitzhak Rabin, told MPs in the Knesset last week that maximum efforts were being made to prepare for the use of gas and chemical weapons, but he refused to comment on suggestions that the development of counter measures was being held up because of recent cuts in the defence budget.

The Foreign Ministry has also publicised an appeal by the Foreign Minister, Mr Shimon Peres, to foreign ambassadors in Israel, in which he urged all countries to ban sales to Iraq and Syria of materials used in chemical weapons.

Extensive use of chemical and gas weapons by the Iraqis in the Gulf war has given an impetus to the development and refinement of a means of combat that is far deadlier today than when it was first used during the second battle of Ypres in April, 1915.

Israel is widely assumed to have its own gas and chemical warfare arsenal, but refused to acknowledge that it has such weapons and is anxious to underline the extent to which its Arab enemies are producing them. Egypt, with Soviet help, was the Arab pioneer in the field and used mustard and phosgene gas in the Yemeni civil war in the 1960s and, according to Israeli sources, is still the regional leader.

Syria, the country most likely to go to war with Israel, reportedly received its first chemical weapons from Egypt in the 1970s and then set up its own production programme. According to Western sources, the Syrians are now at an advanced stage of development and have reportedly offered to pass on their newly acquired expertise to Iran.

Cancer strikes where nuclear bomber crashed

By Paul Feldman in Copenhagen

EIGHTEEN years after an American nuclear-armed B52 bomber crashed in northern Greenland, more than 500 workers who helped in the clean-up operation are sick and 98 of them are suffering from cancer despite an official report that maintained there was no risk to human health.

An unknown number of the same group of workers are said to have died as a result of exposure to plutonium released in the accident, a few miles from the US base at Thule.

Last week, the Danish Prime Minister, Mr Poul Schlueter, announced that surviving workers from the base would be examined by radiological experts. His decision is seen as a belated response to growing public concern over the affair.

The wife of the personnel manager at the base at the time of the crash on January 21, 1968, has been instrumental in collecting names, addresses and medical evidence from the affected workers. In total, there were 800 Danes on the base. "I asked a doctor to help me draw up a questionnaire to send to them," said Mrs Sally Markussen. "They have many sad stories to tell. Over 500 are sick in one way or another; more than 90 have cancer."

For Mrs Markussen's husband, Ole, the Government's renewed interest in the affair would appear to have come too late. He suffers trouble with his breathing, frequent vomiting, excretion of blood and has lost 66 pounds. His sickness began in 1979, when he was aged 41.

Mrs Markussen's inquiries uncovered many common symptoms, including weight loss, constant tiredness, loss of concentration, loss of balance, loss of coordination between hand and brain, damage to the eyes, breathing problems, congestion in the lungs and sores on the shins and arms that will not heal.

Soren Bager's illness began when he returned to Denmark from Thule in 1970. He has pains in the abdomen and a constant feeling of breathlessness. An operation removed one of his testicles but did nothing to ease the pain. He has open wounds on the arm which will not heal.

It was his job to grease the motorised sledges that went out on to the ice in the big clear-up and returned in a contaminated state. "I told my doctors that my sickness was due to the radiation at the base. But they said they knew nothing about such things, nor did they want to know," he said.

The affair began when the B52, on a 24-hour airborne alert mission, ran into trouble five hours into the flight. An attempt at an emergency landing on Thule was abandoned and the crew ejected.

The plane disintegrated as it hit the sea ice eight miles west of Thule. The detonation of the conventional explosives in the four H-bombs on board dispersed the plutonium inside the weapons, which mixed with the jet fuel and contaminated the ice.

Some of the contaminated ice and snow was undoubtedly blown on to the base by strong winds, say workers.

American soldiers were brought in to remove the blackened ice. It was taken back to the base, where the Danes helped load the radioactive material into converted 25,000-gallon fuel tanks.

Danish workers welded the tanks after they were filled with the contaminated snow.

In all, 67 tanks were filled with snow and four more with general debris. By March 15, 1968, the whole area had been cleared. But it was not until the following September that the last of the material left for the United States.

On February 16, 1968, a joint US-Danish statement declared: "It was agreed that under present conditions the radioactivity spread in the area is not a hazard to people or biological species, nor is any hazard foreseen for the future." On March 19, another joint release gave the final all-clear. Scientific measurements, it said, "confirmed the earlier views that there is no risk for human beings."

As a result of these optimistic conclusions there was no long-term medical monitoring of the Danish workers, including 70 dockers brought from the mainland.

An official report published in 1970 turned out to be little more than a collection of self-congratulatory articles by military officers and scientists. The foreword, by US Major-General Richard Hunziker, who headed the clear-up operation, set the tone.

"A major disaster was turned into a classic example of international cooperation. The seemingly insurmountable task of recovering and removing all traces of the accident proves again that truth may be stranger than fiction — and fully as exciting."

The report does not account for all the plutonium involved. The bombs contained at least 20 kilogrammes, and possibly 48 kilogrammes, of plutonium. Yet the report speaks only of around 4.5 kilogrammes recovered or on the seabed.

In the conclusion to the 1970 report, Hans Henrik Koch, then chairman of the executive committee of the Danish Atomic Energy Commission, wrote: "No danger to man or animal and plant life was created by the Thule accident — that is, now a well-established fact."

Kremlin stooges swamp Human Rights Day rally

By Martin Walker in Moscow

MR GORBACHEV'S slick new propaganda machine last week reconquered the last token bastion of free speech in Moscow.

For the past 10 years, Human Rights Day has seen the brave and embattled remnants of the dissident movement gathering in Pushkin Square to make a silent, moving protest.

This year, keen young Communists and dozens of students from the Soviet diplomatic institute thronged Pushkin Square as evening fell. They swamped the handful of dissidents who had come from all over the Soviet Union to mark Human Rights Day.

Previous years had seen sudden flurries of plainclothes KGB men and uniformed police making their arrests. This year, the arrests were discreet, carried out earlier in the day to keep the genuine demonstrators away from the tiny patch of ground around Pushkin's statue just off Moscow's main thoroughfare of Gorky Street.

Four members of divided families, who had been appealing for exit visas on humanitarian grounds, were arrested at their homes for questioning and detained for four hours earlier in the day.

But in Pushkin Square, in the shadow of the Izvestia building, the occasional dissident who had come to make an annual statement to Western journalists was drowned out by loudspeakers which blared out officially approved songs, from the Italian Communist Party's Avanti Popolo to the Komsomol peace anthem.

"This is a spontaneous demo on behalf of the political prisoners in the West: For Nelson Mandela in South Africa and for the Palestinian freedom fighters in Israeli gaols," said Alexei Petrov, a student at the Institute of International Relations. "We wanted to mark Human Rights Day in our way," he said. "It was our own idea."

He was carrying a banner which read: "Eternal greetings to those who languish in the prisons of reaction, victimised for their struggle for peace and democracy."

The Soviet Union also market Human Rights Day with a pledge to "welcome dissenting opinions" at a proposed human rights conference in Moscow next year, a promise to start publishing its crime statistics, and a new attack on its most celebrated dissident, the Nobel Laureate, Dr Andrei Sakharov.

"Much of what Sakharov did was against the law," the deputy chairman of the Supreme Court, Mr Gusev, told a Moscow press conference. "I myself warned him about his unauthorised political activity. He would not stop. We could have applied the criminal law against him, but we took a lesser measure, an administrative measure of sending him to live in Gorky."

Mr Gusev insisted that since Dr Sakharov's enforced exile had been imposed by a decree of the Supreme Soviet, it was entirely legal.

Mr Gusev's statement followed a series of questions about Dr Sakharov at the human rights press conference which had been met with mockery by the deputy head of the Foreign Ministry's humanitarian affairs department, Mr Vsevolod Sofinsky.

Asked why Dr Sakharov was still in exile, Mr Sofinsky replied: "Nothing is permanent in this world, and what is temporary is often most permanent." Pressed about official plans for Dr Sakharov's future, he replied: "We do everything on the basis of a plan, except for that which cannot be planned."

These answers, which provoked catcalls and jeers from the crowded and increasingly frustrated press conference, set the tone for a very hardline series of official statements.

It was confirmed officially by a Foreign Ministry spokesman that the celebrated dissident Anatoly Marchenko had "died in a hospital of a brain haemorrhage, after suffering a long illness." Mr Marchenko, who had spent over 20 of his 48 years in prison camps, had not been allowed to see his wife for 2½ years, in apparent contravention of the Soviet penal code.

Marchenko had been serving a 10-year sentence for anti-Soviet agitation. This resulted from his work as a member of the Helsinki Watch group, established to monitor Soviet compliance with the Helsinki treaties.

His death removes one of the last outstanding figures of the Soviet dissident movement, a figure whose name and courageous record still had the power to mobilise support in the West. The deportations this year of Anatoly Shcharansky and Yuri Orlov have removed from the East-West equation two of the other outstanding dissident inmates of the Gulag.

His account of his campaign against the Soviet system, his prison terms and prosecution, was published in the West 15 years ago under the title of My Testament. This will remain an outstanding document of the Soviet human rights movement.

Soviet authorities had recently been putting pressure on Marchenko's wife, Larissa Bogoraz, to apply for permission for herself, her husband and their son to emigrate to Israel. She is Jewish, but has no relatives in Israel. She said in a recent interview that she refused to apply to emigrate without first speaking with her husband, who she was allowed to visit in April, 1984. She demanded a meeting with Marchenko, but the KGB had not responded.

The telegram from Chistopol Prison, about 500 miles east of Moscow, was believed to be the first information Mrs Bogoraz received about her husbnd since she asked for permission to visit him late last month.

Marchenko met his wife when they were both serving terms in the Siberian town of Chuna. She had been sent into exile for protesting at the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

How Gorbachev ventured abroad — and got nowhere

By Martin Walker

THIS is the time of year when Mikhail Gorbachev's mind turns to the question of the speech he will give to the Soviet people on New Year's Eve, which is one of the few Russian holidays that does not require a parade in Red Square. It is an altogether different kind of event, the post-revolutionary and un-religious version of Christmas.

It involves Christmas trees, special shop window displays, children's parties in the Kremlin, and at the big toy store Detski Mir, you can book a visit to your home by Dedushka Moroz or Grandfather Frost.

He looks like Santa Claus, and he carries a sack with presents for children, he sings and dances and goes "Ho-ho-ho." The later in the day he makes his call, the more you realise that his attendant snow maiden is there to hold Grandpa Frost upright after the inevitable seasonal tots of vodka have been pressed upon him in every home.

There is even a healthy dash of commercialism about the festival. The shops sell special gift-wrapped New Year presents, and hundreds of millions of Happy New Year cards are printed to clog the mail. The forests around Moscow are patrolled by volunteer guards to stop private enterprise in the Christmas tree business.

Last year, in the euphoria after the Geneva summit, there was even a mood of peace on earth and goodwill to all men, as Reagan and Gorbachev exchanged New Year greetings on one another's TV networks. This year, we are unlikely to be so lucky.

For all the effort Mr Gorbachev has put into foreign policy, he has woefully little to show for it. The Star Wars project goes on, the Salt-2 arms control agreement is dead, the ABM treaty has one foot on the scaffold, and Britain and France seem set on a dramatic enhancement of their nuclear forces.

In spite of his personal visits to Britain and France, and the regular essays in the Soviet press on the theme of "Europe — our common home", Mr Gorbachev cannot claim that the gloom over Soviet-US relations is in any way compensated by a thaw on the European front.

Indeed, relations with West Germany are at one of their lowest points for years, with Moscow cancelling virtually all government-level meetings and visits after Chancellor Kohl's gaffe that compared Gorbachev to Dr Goebbels. But with all the polls pointing to another Kohl victory in next month's German elections, Moscow just has to lump it.

Mr Gorbachev badly needs a diplomatic success, which probably explains the flurry of activity on the Asian front we have seen this year. But here, too, there have been disappointments. His trip to India was presented to the folk back home by the Soviet media as a triumph, with TV prime time and column inches of the kind usually reserved for a superpower summit.

And yet the Soviet leader did not get the agreement he wanted — the Indian endorsement of the cornerstone of Moscow's new policy of an all-Asian security conference, an eastern version of European and Atlantic process that goes by the generic name of the Helsinki Treaty.

Nor have we yet seen the breakthrough Mr Gorbachev seeks in his relations with China. Sino-Soviet trade flourishes and government-to-government contacts are regular and polite. But there is still little sign of the restoration of party-to-party links between the world's two largest and most powerful Communist parties.

There has been a somewhat blithe assumption in Moscow that next November's delegation will be paying their respects in Red Square. Mr Gorbachev's seminal speech at Vladivostock last July, in which he spelt out his new Asian policy, was aimed at clearing away the main obstacles that could still stop the Chinese party from coming.

China has defined three obstacles to better relations: the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan; the presence of Moscow's Vietnamese ally in Kampuchea, and the Soviet troop build-up on the Mongolian and Manchurian frontiers.

In his Vladivostock speech, Mr Gorbachev announced the withdrawal of some 8,000 troops from Afghanistan, and troop reduction in Mongolia. He also suggested redrawing the Sino-Soviet border along the central channel of the Amur River, which would transfer to China some of the islands now occupied by Russian troops, and which were the scene of the border clashes of the late 1960s.

On Kampuchea, however, he had nothing new to say, beyond the usual platitudes about the need for better Sino-Vietnamese relations. This may change next week, when Gorbachev's deputy, Mr Yegor Ligachev, goes to Hanoi for the Vietnamese party congress. There is little hope of any real change in Vietnam's role in Kampuchea, and most Hanoi-watchers predict the party congress will deal mainly with internal matters and cautious economic reforms.

And even if Kampuchea were to be settled through some form of coalition government and Vietnamese troop withdrawal, that would not automatically open the way to better relations between Moscow and Peking. While Mr Gorbachev was preparing his trip to India, there came a sudden and ominous reminder of just how many unexploded bombs remain on the Sino-Soviet border.

In the short term, we may one day come to call it the War of the Sung Succession. In the long term, it could be the War of Korean Reunification.

Whatever the South Korean ministry of defence may have announced, Kim Il Sung of North Korea did not die last month. But some kind of crisis evidently occurred in Pyongyang shortly after the venerable leader returned from Moscow with the promise of MiG-23 jets, SAM-missiles, and T-80 tanks. He did not, however, get Moscow's backing for his plan to pass on the leadership to his son.

Kim Il Sung consolidated his power in North Korea in the late 1950s by purging both the pro-Moscow and pro-Peking factions in his party, and by subsequently playing off each of his superpower neighbours against one another. The result has been a long stability which is now beginning to look not only fragile, but dangerous for all the neighbours. The Stalinist time-warp in which North Korea has been locked for a generation is unlikely long to survive Kim Il Sung himself.

The obvious solution would be for Moscow and Peking to agree on a compromise succession to Kim Il Sung, to pledge non-interference, and not to allow North Korea to become a contentious issue between them. Moscow's latest arms deals have hardly helped that process. And even if it worked, it would simply delay the real problem — that South Korea has almost twice the population, very much more wealth than the north, and a political instability problem of its own.

From the Kremlin window, the world must appear a rather dangerous place as Mr Gorbachev watches them haul in the huge fir tree that will be the centre-piece of the New Year festivities in St George's Hall. His Vladivostock speech has evoked little response in Asia. His Reykjavik concessions have been spurned by the Americans, and even the French and Germans and the British have recoiled in alarm at his suggestion of taking all the missiles out of Europe.

His only concession is that the view from the White House window is probably even gloomier this Christmas season, as the lame-duck President watches the ravaging of his administration, and suffers the endless revenge of the ayatollahs.

Trying to sell Labour's defence policy

FIRST, accentuate the positive. Europe, in the dismaying aftermath of Reykjavik, needs to do some hard, fresh thinking about its defence. We can't go on any longer believing in doctrines like No First Use, which even the generals, with their fingers near the button, think ancient, shabby and unrealistic. We can't go on demanding [illegible] us feel safer, then demanding they go, then throwing a panicky fit when the two presiding superpowers seem briefly to be making progress. We can't go on just watching a progressive, bungling escalation of nuclear armaments. We can't go on attacking the Americans for lording it over us but refusing to contribute enough to our collective defence. What's happening out there, on the ground and in the desultory negotiating rooms, is a failure of perception and statesmanship, an irresolute lack of will to say not "Stop the world, we want to get off" but "Stop the world, we want to make a new start." An honest start which recognises that, without nuclear weapons, the threat of conventional war *would be* increased. But honest, too, in believing that forty years of relative tranquillity in Europe is but a pimple on the face of time — no guarantee at all of sanity or efficiency for the next forty years, or the years beyond that. And if the thin balance of probability fails, then we and our children face a ruined earth.

There is no weakness or treachery to a leader who sees these imperatives clearly across such a time scale. He shares precisely the same stated goals as Mr Ronald Reagan. There is emotion to his feelings to be sure; but necessary emotion, without which there is no vision of what might be and no fire in the belly to try to make things happen.

No one, then, should deride Mr Neil Kinnock for the long-standing, personal commitment he brings to Labour's defence policy. To the contrary. We have here a potentially precious prize — the leader of a major party in a Western democracy who genuinely seeks to turn back the ratchet of nuclear armament. We have, too, a party which is striving — at some cost — to propagate new ways and new concepts in a continent which desperately needs them. *And now, to package, gloss and sell them.*

The trouble, then, is not the emotion or the resolution; it is the getting from here to there. And any amount of packaging and eloquence, alas, still seems wholly uncertain to transform the ugly duckling of conferences past into an electoral swan. The problem is complex, but fundamental. It stems essentially from the way a major party has drawn conclusions from humbling defeat in 1983. Some things that went wrong then — like opposition to selling council houses — could pragmatically be [illegible] way (under Mr Kinnock) that unilateral nuclear disarmament could be jettisoned. The impulsion, then, was to find what people particularly didn't like in 1983, and to try to massage it. The voters thought Labour was weedy about Nato. Very well, we must be terribly firm in our commitment to the Alliance. They thought that unilateral nuclear disarmament meant unilateral disarmament of every kind. Very well. We must be terribly strong on conventional armament. The leader himself must go to Berlin and jut jaws across the wall. He must develop all the jargon of the defence buff. If we can make these adjustments, then all will be well.

'All the expertise in the world about the best role for F1-11s or Tornadoes won't help in a Britain where (on current form) a majority of voters are Gaullist; not liking the Yanks much, but not wanting to do away with our own bomb.'

The difficulty is that it isn't. What Labour offered in 1983 may not have been what the electorate (or even Denis Healey) wanted: but it was logically consistent. A banning of our bomb. A casting adrift from the Alliance. The creation, over time, of a kind of offshore Sweden which either would (or wouldn't) have acted as a moral beacon and catalyst for action around the globe. Weaving away with the sticking plaster hasn't helped one jot. It has made the chops in logic more obvious. A Labour Britain could, sure enough, ban our own bomb. The Americans wouldn't oppose that. The Europeans might accept it fairly phlegmatically. Many (including this paper) would welcome the step as a sensible readjustment of changed national self-perception in a world where we are only a middle-range power in straitened economic circumstances; and where the delusions of empires gone perform a profound disservice. So Labour could scrap Polaris and cancel Trident. The dislocation is that that wouldn't make us more influential within the Alliance; rather the reverse. And whilst our conventional, much-touted contribution to Nato continued to enjoy the protection of the United States nuclear umbrella, it would make us more dependent on Washington. Not [illegible] no big cheese there anyway. But a bit.

Couple that initiative on Polaris, however, with a simultaneous notice to the Americans to get their nukes off our patch, and the hiatus becomes instantly apparent. It would be nice if we were Holland or Belgium; but we're not. Our role within Nato as the key staging post for the American guarantee is unhappily quite different. So the shock to our partners and allies cannot, prudently, be underestimated.

A shock of some sort may be no bad thing. But no-one now does any favours by sliding over the illogic of what is proposed. On the one hand, on Nato's Central Front, we shall negotiate with our allies and accept at the end the obligations of "partnership"; so our troops may continue to shelter beneath the American nuclear umbrella. (One change of tack in the months since Mr Kinnock talked to Panorama). On the other hand, because Britain is "our sovereign territory", we shall instruct the Americans (of Nato) who will be sheltering our troops in Germany to remove the weapons based here which fulfil this task. We shall be bound to the decisions of our "partners" in one part of the alliance, but not in another. That doesn't sound very convincing. Nor does the thought that it is possible to be a full-hearted member of a club, whilst insisting on playing by quite separate rules.

Thus far the partners have had only a fleeting opportunity to hold the policy up to the light and say what they think. The Americans don't like the package. Not just Mr Regan's Americans: the Cuomos and Harts and Nunns queuing up behind. And, if anything, the Europeans are more fearful, most hostile, and more denunciatory. Mr Rau and Mr Brandt in Germany of course, might be a trifle more amenable; but there is absolutely no sign that they will be elected to office. So it will all be jolly sticky. The coldest glummest audience to win over.

Last week's scrap of [illegible] underlines the point. Originally the Americans would have been out of their nuclear bases within a year. Discussion, of course; consultation; but not negotiation. Now, suddenly, the period of discussion stretches into the distance. It may even consume a whole parliamentary term. In 1993 Foreign Minister Healey may still be trooping back from Washington reporting more infinitely delayed consultations. The saga spread across five years. Does that sound better? Not to the Left at Mr Kinnock's back, it doesn't. But it may not sound particularly appealing to the voters either, one guesses. We pledge half a decade of constant hassle. All the expertise in the world about the best role for F1-11s or Tornadoes won't help in a Britain where (on current form) a majority of voters are Gaullist; not liking the Yanks much, but not wanting to do away with our own bomb.

Well, Labour believes the plan can be sold: and seems ready to stake all its domestic battles of policy and aspiration on the outcome. The ends demand respect and encouragement; but the means are still getting in the way. One tragedy is that public and professional perceptions across Europe are again in flux; that Labour is having to fight for its hearts and minds too soon, and certainly too inflexibly. But another is that three years ago Mr Kinnock himself actually espoused a policy which more easily fits every bill. "A nation of our size," he said then, should "use Britain's nuclear status for the sole purpose, repeat the sole purpose, of securing force reductions culminating in a non-nuclear defence strategy within the lifetime of a parliament." In short, set a believer in the need to achieve *something* loose within the club, arguing and levering for real nuclear disarmament. That, across the frail, tremulous wastes of post-Reykjavik Europe, would be a risk worth thinking about. But somehow, in all the spatchcock adjustments about tank traps and a few extra frigates, the purpose of the exercise seems to have got lost. It isn't too late to start afresh. Events themselves may give that chance. But the sticking plaster box is getting awfully empty.

Report, page 4

The unsinkable Mr Arafat

PALESTINIAN leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank have acted swiftly to try to forestall further conflict of the kind which began a month ago. On November 15 a student at a Jewish seminary in the Old City was stabbed to death, and Israelis immediately began to witness, and contribute to, an outburst of revolt on the West Bank which was more open and sustained than for many years. On Friday an elderly Jew suffered serious stab wounds on his way from prayers in the Old City. In response the Arab leaders, spokesmen in effect for the Palestine Liberation Organisation, condemned the incident as "in complete contradiction to the humanist and religious laws in which we believe." Their robust message deserves to be heeded.

The renewed conflict has come at a time when measures to improve the everyday lives of Palestinians, taken in cooperation with Jordan, had seemed to Israelis to herald a period of relative peace. But as the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz has observed, it is not the conditions of life but the occupation itself against which the latest demonstrations have been mounted. West Bank and Gaza residents, students especially, do not act in isolation from other events in the Arab world, of which there have been several to catch their attention. The most important is the success of the PLO and of Yasser Arafat personally in rebuilding a strength in Lebanon which Israel, along with President Assad, thought had vanished for good.

West Bankers both benefit from and resent the stealthy cooperation between Israel and Jordan which they fear has been leading to a condominium in which they have no voice. The appointments of Jordanian-approved mayors and the influx into businesses and property of Jordanian money (a well-intentioned reversal of policy on the part of Mr Peres when Prime Minister) are not a substitute for self-determination. Palestinians have a distant recollection, too, that half way through his first term President Reagan produced a realistic plan for the region. It involved a semi-autonomous West Bank in confederation with Jordan. The author of this document was assumed to be George Shultz. Whatever his current rating in the American Congress it is not high among Palestinians, because having produced a plan which was well worth negotiating he did nothing substantial to follow it through. If the process did not collapse when Arafat and King Hussein of Jordan parted company in February this year it collapsed as soon as the US publicly immersed itself in the Iranian scandal. For the rest of its time this, in Palestinian eyes, is a spent administration.

Whether a more assertive American policy could have brought Palestinians' ambitions any nearer fulfilment, or might do so in future, is still a question they have to address. Every scheme proposed has fallen foul of the incompatibility between Palestinians' just demands for a homeland and Israelis' just demands for security from Arab attack. The intention of the Reagan plan was to meet this obstacle by making Jordan the Palestinians' protecting power, Jordan having no interest in a war with Israel. It was not American inactivity alone which doomed this approach. The Palestinians do not want to exchange Israeli overlordship for Jordanian, which they have experienced before. Out of this impenetrable frustration come the stones thrown at Israeli vehicles and the deaths of Palestinian teenagers from Israeli guns. What has the PLO done for Palestinians all these years? Palestinians meet the question with another: where else can we turn except to the PLO?

Another jolt for Sellafield

FOR British Nuclear Fuels the year ends as it began: with another critical report, another "major jolt", this time putting statutory clout behind the demand that Sellafield be tidied up. The Commons select committee's report on radioactive waste, completed in January, which questioned whether the oxide reprocessing plant now being built should not be abandoned altogether, was withering to a degree, but it was the work of self-confessed laymen. "Of all the inquiries the committee has tackled so far," it said, "this is undoubtedly the most technically difficult." The 29 specific changes required if Sellafield is to continue operating are, by contrast, the product of 10 months' scrutiny by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate. Ten years ago the Flowers commission complained of bad housekeeping at Sellafield (then Windscale) and multiple examples of it have been witnessed since. This time BNFL is under notice to do something quickly or face closure of the works. Major jolt indeed.

Sellafield's inescapable handicap is its antiquity, which gave rise to a management philosophy, to caricature only slightly, that all problems were soluble by a spot of welding. One criticism by the NII, for example, is that so many modifications have been made to the control room and its panels that no one now has a clear idea of what is happening in every part of the works. Yet the inspectors acknowledge that Sellafield is going through a period of massive and beneficial investment and that "standards in all respects have been improving". They also concede that they have found nothing new, serious, or fundamental affecting hazards to the public. Nevertheless they have acted in the spirit of the select committee report which said that the nuclear industry as a whole must abandon the shoe-string approach and go for the Rolls-Royce solution to every problem, "to convince the public in actions as well as words". Much higher standards of safety are required of nuclear installations than of straight chemical ones (witness the consortium of companies lately pitching their pollutants into the Rhine). Where the new management at Sellafield differs from its accident-prone predecessors is in recognising that fact. At all events it seems not only confident that all the NII's demands can be met well before the allotted time but enthusiastic to meet them.

Where the MPs and the NII differ is in the main target for attack. The select committee proposed abandoning the plant now being built to process fuel from British and foreign second-generation reactors, which is due to come into service in 1992. The inspectors were much more worried about the state of the old central reprocessing unit which has a heavy load of Magnox fuel awaiting its attention. This is the building that BNFL has to put right to remain in business. Although Sellafield has acquired these highly lucrative contracts for reprocessing other countries' spent fuel, its long-term future is inseparable from the decisions now pending on Britain's own nuclear power programme. It will be surprising if these decisions are at all clear-cut, whatever Sir Frank Layfield may report about Sizewell, and the Generating Board is wisely hedging its bets with a programme for coal-fired plant. Even, therefore, if BNFL does all that is now required of it there can be no guarantee that it will continue for all time and that the alternative of dry storage, without reprocessing, will not come to be seen as preferable. The select committee asked for a thorough analysis, financial and technical, of that option. So far, it has not been forthcoming.

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Le Monde
ENGLISH SECTION

Pasqua's actions put police on the spot

By Georges Marion and Edwy Plenel

Why did Bernard Gérard, director of the DST (Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire — the counter-intelligence service), plead "defence secrecy" and refuse to give Jean-Pierre Michau, the judge investigating the Carrefour du Développement scandal (misappropriation of public funds involving a Ministry of Cooperation venture under the former Socialist government), the details he sought concerning the origin of the "genuine-but-fake" passport used by Yves Chalier on his flight to Brazil? With an international warrant out for him, Chalier, who used to be head of Cooperation Minister Christian Nucci's ministerial office, used a passport issued to him under the name of Yves Navaro. Chalier later surrendered to French police. The answer is simple: the DST boss would appear to have been "shielding" Interior Minister Charles Pasqua. The passport could not have been issued to Chalier at the end of July by the counter-intelligence service without the minister's authorisation.

There is no proof that this is the case, but the confidential disclosures made by several Interior Ministry officials along with the ministry's operating rules supply corroborative clues. The DST boss's refusal to provide the information on the grounds of national security appears to be hard to justify as Chalier was a man on the run; he was not on a "mission" and in any case never worked in the DST. And the DST's files contain sufficient evidence to show that the passport was issued to him during Pasqua's reign. One senior police officer, Jacques Delebois, head of the International police technical cooperation service (SCTIP) has already been charged for helping Chalier to flee the country.

THE WAY the Carrefour du Développement case has been "managed" by certain Interior Ministry officials, who appear to have helped the principal defendant and accuser in the case to escape justice, has come to aggravate the deep-seated problems in all sectors of the police department. Almost as soon as he took over the Interior Ministry, Charles Pasqua announced he had found "a messy, politicised ministry and demoralised employees. Now, it's a business that's running sweetly." He was exaggerating and being unfair; that "compliment" can now be returned to its author. The police are again heartily sick of politics.

This minister, son of an urban policeman, former head of the SAC (Service Action Civique) and zealous Gaullist devoted to the point of personally doing all the dirty work involved in regaining power, wishes to remain exactly as he has always been. Boastful, belligerent, chubby and incisive, charmer and demagogue, he seized his ministry roughly to use it as a strategic point from which to carry out the mission he has assigned himself — get Jacques Chirac elected President of France.

But today this image is beginning to cause concern, as was shown by the upsurge among high school pupils and university students whose target, after the initial violence, was Pasqua. Youth that rejects a certain style of political conduct. Youth that also includes children of rightwing voters.

Pasqua manages words, and his verbal outbursts have placed him at the centre of many a tense moment experienced by the government, when they have not actually caused them. As early as April the Interior Minister thundered: "In less than a week, policemen are back in the street . . . Order has returned . . . France must stop being a refuse tip . . . We're going to terrorise the terrorists." But the terrorists continued to carry out their exactions. Sending 101 Malian immigrants back to their country by charter plane on the strength of a simple administrative order made the government's immigration policy look like an expeditious clean-up. The presence of policemen on the streets has been blemished by deadly "slip-ups". Maintaining law and order has taken on the appearance of disorder by the repression of student demonstrations and the curious tolerance shown "casseurs" (armed men wrecking cars and shop windows and the demonstration at the same time).

The seeds of all this were present back in May when Justice Minister Albin Chalandon considered his counterparts at Interior (Pasqua and Pandraud) to be "maximalist" and expressed his concern about police "super-motivation bordering on arrogance". The warning did not dampen Pasqua's fire. The apparent success of his television appearance on July 2 ended with the resignation of the Paris police prefect, a man highly regarded by Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac, who considered the minister had undermined the prefect's office. To this must be added the sharp protest from Archbishop Decourtray of Lyons who said he was "shocked" to be accused of not having read the draft bill concerning foreigners in France which was a matter of concern to the Catholic Church.

Confronted by the Rue de Mogador (in Paris) "slip-up" (a young motorist shot at close range by a riot policeman), Pasqua, who in May had promised the police that they "are covered by their superiors" — "We'll cover them, that's no problem," he insisted — preferred to hit out at the press and witnesses. He sneered at "so-called testimony", the accuracy and relevancy of which have now been established, he accused "left-wing newspapers and television" of exploiting the incident and was positive that "this climate encouraged members of Action Directe to strike at the police . . . They have organised a public trial; you'd think you were in Moscow."

Finally, this minister, who is said to have been sensible enough to suggest right at the start of the student movement that Devaquet's draft bill be withdrawn, was in large part responsible for creating the agitation which in the end gripped the ruling Majority and prodded the Prime Minister to withdraw the text. After having proclaimed on December 2 that "the government will not withdraw its text" and that "it is Parliament that votes laws, not the street", Pasqua promptly exploited the movement as if he wanted to repeat the June '68 mobilisation of Gaullists. The backlash could not have been worse: his calculated outbursts of fury looked like panic. While Chirac kept calling for "calm and reason", his Interior Minister was urging RPR militants to defend "democracy and the Republic" which he alleged were threatened by "professional destabilisers, extreme leftists and anarchists of every stripe and nationality."

These words would be laughable if the intention was to promote the ministry of which he is in charge. But Pasqua was also mistaken about the police. The police have changed, they have become younger; they have become aware of the state of underdevelopment in which their service had been left by shortsighted management; they are in search of their identity as a profession and are trying to win social recognition in the face of the political manipulation their service is sometimes forced to put up with.

Though aided by someone familiar with the police, Pandraud, Pasqua has not chosen this way. Purely tactical considerations and the search for quick political pay-offs guide him in running his ministry. And this has led to an some inevitable confusion: in international terrorism, the criminal investigation services have become

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Death on the streets

By Philippe Boucher

AT THE COST of two deaths, though we must not forget the injured, the streets have returned to tranquillity, the students to their studies, politics to its proper sphere, the government to its Saint Gobain shares and authority to the Elysée. The first of these deaths was caused by the victim's political friends, the second by policemen. The first will recover from it, the second will soon be laid in the ground.

As is customary in political matters, Alain Devaquet's ministerial demise leaves room for all kinds of resurrections. The world he has quit is the only one where there is no question of doubting the existence of phantoms. In this particular theatre, actors in death throes make extraordinary recoveries that leave their erstwhile executioners dumbfounded.

Some come back even before they have quite gone away. Education Minister René Monory is one of them; comfortably settled into his ministerial office on the Rue de Grenelle, he used to say in private: "If the government withdraws the entire bill, I'll resign."

We have been spared such a catastrophe, just as we have been spared the need to verify a prophecy of Monory who once said: "If the government withdraws its draft bill, there's no more government." That may well be true, but the government has yet to notice it, and Monory is still part of a government that in his view no longer exists. Nevertheless, he is jaunty and pleased with himself. He could be a Barrist if he were not dreaming of Monoryism.

Devaquet was badly let down by his own side. But at at least the poor man had the courage to opt for this political suicide by resigning. Nobody else followed suit. Should we have expected it? Monory? Pasqua? Pandraud? Wedded as they are to delights they know to be shortlived, the ministers know full well the price of doing the honourable thing.

We have not still heard it said that Malik Oussekine (the 22-year-old French student of Algerian origin found dead in the Latin Quarter on the night of December 5/6 after police pursued him into the entrance of a building) committed suicide by hurling himself against the clubs, fists and boots of policemen, but we must not lose hope. Especially in view of the rate at which interpretations and fine distinctions now being made — to which the very Socialist public prosecutor of Paris has lent his assistance — to determine whether malfunctioning kidneys are likely to cause heart failure, whether it was not a miracle that the young man was still alive at the time (Oussekine suffered from a kidney complaint that necessitated regular haemodialysis, but was otherwise fit and was an active member of his university sports club).

These are sordid subterfuges and they dishonour those who stoop to them for a reason that is only too clear. The lawyer for the dead man's family put his finger on it: "They'd have us believe that if Malik hadn't been ill he wouldn't be dead. We hold that if he hadn't been beaten up he'd still be alive." Enough said.

But nothing has been judged yet. The case has been opened but is proceeding in an extemely dilatory fashion. Will, for example, the two judges ask themselves what surprising preconception there could be in the "label" put on the Malik Oussekine file: "Voluntary assault and bodily harm causing an unintended death." This is taking a cue from the Burgos case (a riot policeman who shot and killed a motorist after he had tried to run from his car). This is the precedent that lays down that policemen kill only inadvertently. Here is a new standard for teaching law students — "the presumption of inadvertence".

This precedent worked in favour of the drunken police inspector who on December 5 at Quatre-Chemins, Pantin, shot dead Abdel Benyahia, a French national of Algerian origin by acknowledging, right from the start, the involuntary character of the homicide and the inspector's right to be allowed to go free. (It will be noted with satisfaction that this jurisprudence is not universally respected. A demonstrator, also drunk and deemed responsible, who caused injury to a riot policeman — fractures in the hand and tibia — with his car has been remanded in custody. We must be careful not to confuse voluntary assault and bodily harm "having caused a police officer to be off work for a week" and voluntary assault and bodily harm "having caused death without the intention of causing it." (Unless it is the victim who fails to see the distinction.)

On the contrary, can we say there is no intention of causing death when one continues to furiously attack a man who shows no signs of life, for good reasons doubtless? Or when a professional user of weapons fires at close range without missing his target?



Drawing by Plantu

Wednesday's student demonstration, and the others that preceded it, the demonstration which will probably accompany Malik Oussekine to his grave, have been important for everybody — those who took part in the demonstrations or who would have like to, those who stayed home but wanted to join in — the end of this consensus whose fundamental aim was to put politics in a category all its own, to make us believe the nationality code is not politics, that private prisons are not politics, that privatisations are not politics, that politics is not politics.

When they talk of consensus, its promoters are merely following the line adopted by American undertakers in their slogan: "Die, we'll do the rest." And if you do not vote either because you don't want to or because you can't yet, it is even better still.

We are guilty of serious error if we believe such despicable politics will add to the bewilderment of young people facing the non-identical twins of despair and violence. Politics could on the contrary save them by making citizens of them.

There is a world of difference between the fact of the existence of broad approval on specific issues and belief in an abstract consensus on any and every issue. We know very well that consensus societies are at worst dictatorships and at best societies of indifference, democratically inert and intellectually arid. France's young people have demonstrated they do not want this; that they are not the "clods" that De Gaulle is said to have found their grandparents to be.

These young people have in no time at all succeeded in getting private prisons, the nationality code and perhaps even the transfer to the Elysée that Jacques Chirac is dreaming of postponed indefinitely. They have done a better job here than their elders who came a cropper over them.

On May 11, 1968, a certain François Mitterrand said: "Youth isn't always right, but the society that attacks it is always wrong." And this time, youth has been right into the bargain.

(December 13)

The Cinémathèque Francaise is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. As a tribute to the world-famous film archive, the French Posts and Telecommunications recently issued a series of postage stamps depicting scenes from famous French films.

And on November 16 and 17, as part of the anniversary celebrations, there were two showings of Alexandre Volkoff's "lost" film, "Casanova" (1927), which starred the legendary Ivan Mosjoukine. The film was given a live musical accompaniment by the Los Angeles Theatre Orchestra.

This event was made possible by a labour of love on the part of two people, the film editor, Renée Lichtig, and France's best-known composer of film music, Georges Delerue. No complete version of the film existed, but there were various fragments of it in film archives all over Europe.

Lichtig eventually succeeded in piecing together the whole movie, and Delerue agreed to write a score which would highlight the action throughout the film just as a pianist or organist used to do in the era of the so-called "silent" cinema.

The rescue operation was no simple matter, as Jacques Siclier and Olivier Schmitt found out when they talked to Renée Lichtig and Georges Delerue.

Labour of love for Casanova

By Jacques Siclier

RENÉE LICHTIG is an internationally known film editor, who works regularly with such directors as the Canadian Gilles Carle and the Frenchman Etienne Périer. In the past, she edited, among other things, two movies by Nicholas Ray, one by Robert Parrish, and Jean Renoir's last three works.

She had always had a good working relationship with the Cinémathèque Francaise, and a year after the death of its founder, Henri Langlois, in 1977, she was called in to set up a verification unit, whose task was to check the identity and condition of the archive's vast, poorly housed, and largely uncatalogued film collection.

She decided that her new job at the Cinémathèque would not stop her continuing as Etienne Périer's film editor. She planned to work on his new film, "Louisiane", but after two years at the project stage it was given to another director (Louis Malle).

So Lichtig decided to stay at the Cinémathèque for good. She had always been fascinated by the restoration of old films, and jumped at the chance to try to piece together Alexandre Volkoff's "Casanova".

"I had always adored the films made in France during the 20s by Russian émigrés such as Josif Ermolieff, Volkoff, Mosjoukine and Victor Tourjansky," Lichtig says. "I was born in China, and my mother, who was of Russian origin, had danced as a young woman with Ivan Mosjoukine. This produced a kind of hero worship in me. And when I came to France I did everything I could to see the films made by those émigrés.

"My current job at the Cinémathèque has a much wider brief than just those films, but I still have a soft spot for the ones starring Mosjoukine. He played Casanova in Volkoff's film of 1927, and again in 1933 in a 'talkie' version shot by René Barberis. But as he had rather a thick accent, he was dubbed. The Cinémathèque has a copy of Barberis's film, which is quite different from Volkoff's."

The only remnants of Volkoff's "Casanova" in the vaults of the Cinémathèque consisted of a single reel, containing scenes of the Venice Carnival, which had been stencil-tinted, and bits and pieces of negative. The Prague Film Archive had three reels of the film, which it lent to the Cinémathèque Française.

Lichtig also went to Rome to look at three other reels of somewhat similar material. But these were the only clues she had which could help her to piece together the screenplay and thus be able to use the fragments of negative.

"One day, in the film bookshop Librairie du Minotaure, I came across an old book containing detailed plot summaries of several silent films. There were photographic illustrations as well. By some miracle, 'Casanova' was in it. The plot summary provided us with a framework for our task of restoration."

Lichtig had already completed a first cut of "Casanova" when Robert Maniquis, professor of French history at the University of Los Angeles, visited the Cinémathèque. Maniquis is a member of the UCLA Film Archive, one of the four major American archives, which has set up a French film collection.

"Maniquis was so enthusiastic about what he saw of 'Casanova'," says Lichtig, "that he asked us if he could borrow the film to show at the opening of a UCLA festival at the beginning of this year. It was then that we had the idea of asking the composer Georges Delerue to write an orchestral accompaniment for the film.

"When restoring 'Casanova' I had to do a lot of cross-checking with the material from Prague and Rome. One of the two negatives I had was fairly complete, but the titles between shots were in English and Casanova was called Roberto Ferrare. So the titles had to be adapted and translated.

"The film was shot in several versions. In the Italian one, pressure from the censors changed the story line. For example, the countess who gets Casanova to kill her husband is sentenced to death. In the French version she enters a convent. I've kept to the French version. Apparently the film had two different endings, and distributors were given the version they asked for. I had only one version, but it held together. That's the one that has been restored.

"Mosjoukine was much more than just an actor. Like Orson Welles and Eric von Stroheim when they appeared in other directors' films, he influenced the way 'Casanova' was directed. What's more, he worked on the screenplay."

"When trying to bring such disparate elements together into a film, I think one has to try to imagine how the director wanted or would have liked his movie to be made. It's something that requires quite a lot of historical and technical know-how, but also, if I may be forgiven for saying so, a great deal of love."

During the silent era, two different techniques called tinting and toning were employed to give certain scenes in films a special atmosphere by the use of a single overall colour (such as sepia or blue-green). There were also sequences which were coloured with stencils. "One such sequence, the Venice Carnival, is superb," says Lichtig, "and the reel we had was in its original edited form.

"Another stencil-coloured sequence — the ball scene — came from Prague. It was in a very sorry state, and we gave it a gold tint. There are other coloured sequences at various points in the film, but most of it is of course in black and white."

Delerue temporarily out of synch

By Olivier Schmitt

GEORGES DELERUE has been composing film music for about 30 of his 61 years. The 200-plus movies that have benefitted from his masterly sense of atmosphere include most of Francois Truffaut's films, "A Man For All Seasons", "Julia", and "Women in Love". Yet with all that experience behind him, Delerue discovered only recently, when writing an orchestral accompaniment for "Casanova", that no two film projectors run at exactly the same speed.

Delerue, who has lived in Hollywood for the last three years, began our interview by asking me the following question: "Did you know that during the winter in the States, because the air conditioning is not turned on, projectors go at a faster speed than in summer, when the cooling machinery is on at full blast and results in a drop in voltage?

"When I agreed to write an orchestral accompaniment for 'Casanova', I didn't realise that its running time was 134 minutes, or that no film is ever projected at exactly the same speed in different cinemas. The score I wrote for the first part of the film, which was supposed to last 70 minutes, followed the action very closely. It wasn't just background music.

"To my dismay, when I started rehearsing with my 15 musicians, we were 24 seconds out of synch with the picture by the end of the projection. This was because the projector in the studio where I had been working on the score ran at a different speed. It was a disaster."

But it could have taken more than that to discourage such an experienced composer as Delerue. He sat down and composed his music in separate sequences of not more than three or four minutes. "It doesn't matter if you're a second or a second and a half out at the end. Between each sequence I composed the musical equivalent of a 'dissolve', which enabled us to get back into synch with the action.

"The film didn't give me too many conceptual or compositional headaches. It's not something I ever worry about anyway. I tried to write an ironical score with the emphasis on lightness rather than on burlesque effects. Above all, I respected the geographical atmosphere of each part of the film — Italy with its farandoles, siciliennes and barcarolles, Russian folk dances, Tyrolean music and so on."

"It required an immense amount of work, but I greatly enjoyed myself. Above all, I didn't want to construct any pretentious musical argument. I don't go in for that sort of thing, and in any case it serves no purpose."

The organisers of the Cinémathèque Française's anniversary celebrations can be especially grateful to Georges Delerue: he took no fee for his work on "Casanova".

Growing shortage of maths teachers worries schools

By Philippe Bernard

The French educational system is having a rough ride at the moment. In addition to the unrest of the last week or so in universities and *lycées*, the Education Ministry is once again faced with the long-standing problem of how to find enough mathematics teachers to meet the needs of secondary school pupils. Every year the Ministry has great difficulty in mustering even the 2,000-3,000 auxiliary teachers it needs to make up the shortage. It has got to the point where the Société Mathématique de France (an association of university mathematics teachers and researchers) is now openly voicing its alarm. The ministry is, apparently, planning to take action. Here, Philippe Bernard puts the problem in perepective.

THE Education Ministry has been pulling out all the stops in its effort to recruit more maths teachers. Alluring small ads and persistent telephone calls are among the methods being used to try to persuade mathematics graduates to succumb to the "charms" of a teaching career.

It is proving so difficult to drum up willing candidates that the ministry has been forced to take on more than 1,000 foreign students as auxiliary teachers, most of them from Africa or the Maghreb countries. Very often, the ministry admits, they are less at home in the French language than they are in mathematics. Naturally, these emergency teachers do not teach *lycée* pupils who have taken the prestigious "C" option (maths, science, economics); they are usually posted to vocational colleges or secondary modern schools in city suburbs, where their presence is less noticeable.

The shortage of maths teachers is a problem that is unlikely to go away tomorrow. The number of students preparing a CAPES degree in maths (the fixed number of candidates who pass the CAPES competitive examination each year are assured of a teaching post) fell by half between 1980 and 1983. Since 1981, the number of maths teaching jobs available to CAPES graduates has risen both very sharply and fairly steadily, yet there are fewer and fewer candidates. In 1980 there was a ratio of 16 candidates for each post on offer, but in 1986 barely two (the number of candidates has not fallen at the same rate; it is just that more and more often they pass their exam at their first attempt).

That being the case, can the maths CAPES examination still be described as a competitive examination? When it is remembered that of the 840 new CAPES graduates in 1986, only 325 could truly be regarded as new recruits (the others were already working in the teaching profession), and that a huge contingent of maths teachers is due to go into retirement over the next few years, the scale of the disaster can be fully measured.

"Disaster" is precisely the term used by the Société Mathématique de France to describe what may befall their discipline. For the situation is just as bad in the universities. University maths teachers, who number about 2,300, including 600 professors, have calculated — and they should know — that if recruitment continues at its present pace their average age by the year 2000 will be 57 as opposed to 44 now.

Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, who is a professor at Polytechnique and a research director at the CNRS (National Scientific Research Centre), is bitter about this: "We're heading for disaster just at the moment when mathematics has become an adventure again; with the advent of computers and a new relationship with technology."

Mathematics research has also been affected by the current trend, which will eventually jeopardise France's ranking as the world's third strongest mathematical nation. Meanwhile, the United States has been making a massive financial effort to lure the best mathematical brains from abroad, and in particular from France.

There are at least two reasons why French maths students are tending to be less and less interested in university research or training: one is the attraction of applied mathematics and information technology, and the other is the big question mark hanging over the future recruitment policy of the Education Ministry, which has always been vulnerable to political or budgetary fluctuations.

And at the head of the pipeline there lies the third key to the problem — the stagnation over the last few decades in the number of pupils with a baccalaureate (A-levels) in science.

Industry and the civil service have been drawing increasingly on this shrinking pool of talent, enticing away from the teaching profession the kind of graduates who might have been drawn to it only 15 years ago. Traditional breeding grounds of top-flight intellects such as the Ecole Normale or Polytechnique now turn out only a handful of mathematicians each year who are willing to take up research or teaching.

As far as science graduates from various other higher education establishments are concerned, the range of jobs made available to them by companies who vitally need their talents has so inflated salaries that the pay offered by a career in teaching cannot possibly offer any competition.

Even university graduates can no longer resist the attractions of information technology and applied science. This trend may mean that universities have after all succeeded in gearing their courses very effectively to the needs of the outside world.

True, the teaching profession makes little effort to attract candidates. Recruitment policies fluctuate so unpredictably that it is impossible for first-year students to have any idea of how many jobs will be available by the time they come to take their CAPES or doctorate examinations.

A career in secondary education would become more attractive if the ministry did not persist in packing new recruits off to the least congenial schools. As a result the youngest teachers are all to be found in the backwaters of each educational region (such as Lille, Créteil or Rheims), while the more experienced colleagues have attractive jobs in the highly reputed *lycées* of, for example, Paris or Nice.

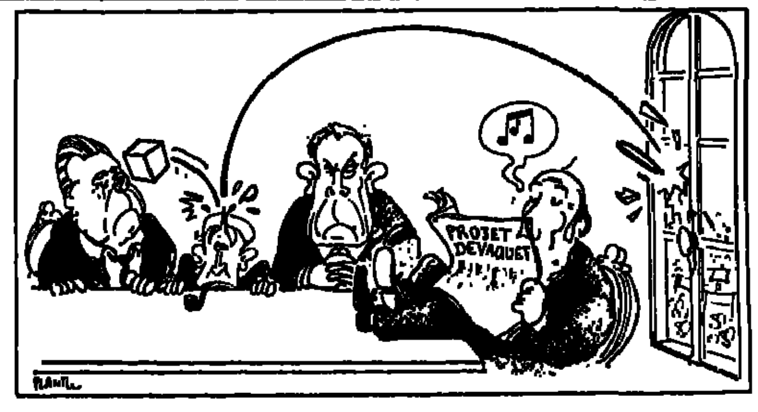
It does not take very long for a maths student to choose between a post at a secondary modern school in the Paris suburb of Bobigny, with a salary of 6,500 francs (about

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Interviewed on radio the day after Prime Minister Jacques Chirac announced his decision to withdraw the controversial education bill which had brought thousands of students and pupils out on to the streets, President François Mitterrand pointed to the "amazing maturity" of these young people and said he was "on the same wavelength". He also took up the slogan of the student organisers of the demonstration on Wednesday of last week against police violence — "Never again", adding: "They're right".

He said the government's decision to withdraw the controversial bill was an "act of wisdom" and that he approved the pause announced by Chirac in the pace of reforms. (Chirac also announced that there would be no extraordinary winter parliamentary sittings.) Though his tone was very conciliatory, Mitterrand slipped in such occasional backhanders like the observation that Chirac had "many fine qualities" but he would like to see "these qualities applied in the right place and at the right moment."

On the question of French hostages held in Lebanon, he hinted he could consider a pardon for Anis Naccache, the leader of the commando group that unsuccessfully tried to assassinate Shapur Baktiar, but only if "all the hostages are freed together at the same time".



Mitterrand sitting pretty with chaos all around

By Jean-Yves Lhomeau

"EVERYBODY is so pleased with what's happening." This comment by former Prime Minister Raymond Barre at the end of a highly charged week and on the morning after a day of dramatically significant political events — a pause in governmental reforms, announced by Chirac; a hymn to youth from Mitterrand — is shot through with paradox and a touch of humour. Unless his friends had given him a very garbled version of what Mitterrand had said on Europe 1, comments he could not personally listen to as at that precise moment he was busy distributing sheepskins at the university.

"Everybody" is doubtless Barre himself, and that is already quite a crowd. But Mitterrand, if we understand him correctly, is not at all satisfied with the Prime Minister, and Chirac, whose "pause" is far from enthusiastic, must be very upset by the President's verdict on himself.

"The Prime Minister has many fine qualities," explained Mitterrand in appropriately smooth tongue. "I should like these qualities to be applied precisely at the right place and at the time." This barbed comment helps us to grasp the nature of his relations, such as he perceives them, with Chirac and the balance of power — variable since March 16 — between the couple forming the executive.

The provocative phrase "at the right moment" is valid for the past.

Mitterrand has not been very appreciative of the Prime Minister's encroachments in spheres where he intends to remain the sole master — foreign policy and defence. This was noticed when the President clearly reasserted his pre-eminence at the Frankfurt summit and on his visit to the Caylus military camp. On Wednesday, he did not go over that again apart from slipping these four words into the conversation. He doubtless considers his authority in these spheres is assured.

"At the right moment": that applies to the present too. Chirac did indeed have the Devaquet education bill withdrawn, "belatedly, but still in time". He was right to order a "pause" in the reforms: the withdrawal should be followed by "behaviour in keeping with this attitude". "Belatedly, but still in time": Mitterrand drove the point home. Here he draws up a tally that everybody can figure out, but he does it with such force that analysing it becomes highly disagreeable for the person concerned.

Chirac is in fact accused of having dithered so long that "if the events had continued they would have endangered the Republic". His hesitation — if we read Mitterrand clearly — was so dangerous that the President, armed with "great patience', was waiting "to seize the moment when he would have to say what was necessary to extricate the country from the mess it had got into." In *short, it was thanks to him*, Mitterrand clearly let it be understood, that the government pulled back from the brink.

As if all this were not enough, Mitterrand implicitly called Chirac a liar, thus giving his answer to a Prime Minister who suggested just as much concerning himself. True neither actually used the insulting term. But the President insisted that he had asked the Prime Minister several times to withdraw the Devaquet bill, whereas Chirac swears he had never heard any such thing.

Unprecedented situations call for unprecedented responses. No Fifth Republic President had ever paid his Prime Minister such a "compliment". At the worst, a President having problems with his subordinate could — as Valéry Giscard d'Estaing did in July 1976 with his "loyal and energetic" Prime Minister, Jacques Chirac, who was to quit a month later — toss off such a wishy-washy compliment that it became a jibe.

I understand you, Chirac in effect told the students when he announced the withdrawal of the Devaquet bill. I've understood you for a long time as I am on your side, Mitterrand told youth in substance.

Since Pierre Mendes France and his radio talks to children in schools, no statesman has sung such a hymn to those who will be judging him "fifteen years from now."

The day provided all the elements of a presidential campaign. Chirac called a halt to his reforms and with his followers prepared to go on the trail to conquer public opinion on the basis of what he has accomplished in almost nine months, he sent his parliamentarians back to their constituencies. And Mitterrand struck a pose waiting for the "people" to give their verdict. Roll on tomorrow!

(December 11)

A state of friction in the alliance

By Daniel Carton

France's RPR-dominated ruling majority, though not a seamless coalition, was, until the recent massive student protests, doing a reasonably good job of arguing away seeming contradictions and presenting a united front to the public. But cracks there were, even if they were concealed, and the up roar caused by the government's clumsy attempts to ram through a package of highly controversial education reforms in double-quick time have widened them.

THE GOVERNMENT has called a pause and everybody in the UDF (Union pour la Démocratie Française, an umbrella organisation that includes liberals and centrists — the Republican Party and the Centre Démocratique et Social, the followers of François Léotard, Raymond Barre and Valéry Giscard d' Estaing) — is more or less enthusiastically totting up his own scorecard.

Léotard's followers have emerged the most bruised by the past fortnight's experiences. Their strategy of going hand-in-hand with the Prime Minister Jacques Chirac's RPR (Rassemblement Pour la République) is in ruins. Their image as excellent ministers in every respect has taken quite a bit of a bashing and their future in the government and, beyond that, in the 1988 presidential election has been seriously compromised. One small detail of the power-sharing arrangement that will be remembered will indeed be how the honeymoon between the RPR and the Republican Party (PR) ended on the morning of Monday, December 8, when Chirac fuming over the liberal ministers' behaviour (especially the attitude of Industry Minister Alain Madelin, who happens to be the No 2 man in the Republican Party) received Madelin at his Hôtel Matignon office, and told him in effect that nobody in his government was to enter into any liaisons for all time.

True, for some weeks now it had been clear the liberal ministers were developing an anti-Chirac itch. The friction with Finance Minister Edouard Balladur, the expulsion of 101 Malians that the liberal junior minister responsible for human rights, Claude Malhuret, found hard to take, and a difference of opinion over the famous "Coluche amendment" (the late cometian and actor Michel Coluche — Colucci — had proposed a tax amendment, espoused by some ruling majority members of parliament, that people be allowed to claim tax deductions for contributions given to the "Restaurants du Coeur" movement he had organised for providing destitute, homeless and hungry people with hot meals in winter) had prompted Léotard and his followers to sound a preliminary warning to the RPR bulldozer at the PR's November 15 national council. Nothing, however, has been settled since then. Quite the contrary.

The recent appointment by the broadcasting control authority, the CNCL (National Council on Communications and Freedom), of new presidents for the nationally owned radio and television networks was felt by Léotard and his followers — though they protest to the contrary now — as a deliberate violation of reciprocal guarantees between them and the RPR. It became clear that, hurt to the quick, they would not pass up an opportunity of reminding the RPR of their presence.

Were they then simply making use of the university controversy to call their all-powerful ally's attention to themselves? That is what the RPR and Chirac's own aides thought. They are taking "Léo's crowd" to task on three fundamental points. First, the liberal ministers' attitude of calculated expectancy: Léotard and Madelin thought of proposing withdrawal of Devaquet's bill only on Friday, December 5, and it was inevitably interpreted as a sneaky blow at the government. Secondly, the interview Madelin gave a morning newspaper, Le Matin de Paris, on Monday, December 8 where he argued the bill was "not worth fighting over to maintain". Proceeding on the principle enunciated by Jean-Pierre Chevènement, the Socialist minister of education in the previous government, that "a minister shuts his trap or quits", this public dereliction of the duty to stand by the government put Chirac in a rage.

And lastly, the RPR accuses Léotard and his followers of having tried, by resorting to a fairly subtle campaign of disinformation, *to delude people into thinking that* Chirac had finally climbed down on the bill only because of strong pressure from Léotard. Clearly enraged by such effrontery, one RPR official accused the PR of nothing less than trying to give itself a label bigger than its bag.

As one Léotard official put it, there is therefore "friction" between the government and the liberal ministers. PR leaders respond to the RPR's anger with exasperation. "If they wanted a conservative and reactionary government," thundered one liberal minister, "they shouldn't have sent for us. The March 16 victory was achieved all together. We were no auxiliaries and we aren't cut out to be that today any more than we were then. It's not liberalism that is in question, but the authoritarian way of ramming through certain reforms."

Officially, all these things are merely intended to be "simple reminders of the rules of propriety." At the meeting of the PR's political bureau on Tuesday, December 9, the instructions were to stay with the government. What other choice is there? "Pursuing a policy of breaking up," admitted a PR official, "would mean losing the advantage gained by the previous strategy." And that is unthinkable for the moment, for it would be playing into the hands of Raymond Barre's followers.

The misfortunes that have befallen "Léo and his crowd" can only gladden the hearts of Barre's men, who feel they are enjoying a veritable transfer of the state of grace. True, no one is crowing, but were it not for the tragic consequences of the recent street demonstrations, it could be said that the Léotardians' misfortunes combined with Chirac's blunders have brought the "Barrists" close to swooning with joy. Considering that what has happened has set the seal on the collapse, in the long run, of the power-sharing arrangement, these Barrists feel events are proving them right sooner than they had hoped. (Raymond Barre had all along held that power-sharing by a Socialist president and a conservative prime minister was unworkable and would ultimately prove to be the government's undoing.) If they are to be believed, the proof has been given that when the government leader's attention is rivetted on the presidency he can only head straight towards a sharp yaw.

At the same time, the Barrists are rubbing their hands with glee over the changes noted in the past few weeks among the parties making up the UDF.

What about the Giscardians? They are also changing. It is not yet time for them to start asking questions about the system of power-sharing, but they note that "the moral credit of M Chirac's government" has been seriously chipped today, and they conclude that "two years is too short a time for applying a liberal policy that is relatively new compared with French traditions."

As soon as he realised the gravity of the upheaval in the world of high school pupils and university students, former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, quickly — but discreetly, so as not to embarrass the government — argued that the Devaquet bill be withdrawn. What has happened can only strengthen his determination to consolidate a UDF firmly adhering to its values, so as to steer the liberal vessel well away from any rightwing currents. A solid UDF would also mean fielding a single candidate in the first round of the 1988 presidential election.

There are tiny clues that seem to suggest Giscard d'Estaing might in the near future commit himself more firmly behind Raymond Barre as a candidate for the presidency. Did he not, after all, recently confide to a centrist minister that he no longer doubted that the two candidates in the presidential election would be Chirac and Barre? The former president could take a first step when the UDF holds its national convention on January 31. Or even two steps, if Barre finally changes his mind and decides to attend the convention which sets out to be united.

(December 12)

New intensity to Colombia's never-ending violence

By Marcel Niedergang

The Colombian capital of Bogota was the scene recently of one of the most savage mass-murders committed by a single person: an electrical engineer, who had fought in the Vietnam war, ran amok for no apparent reason, killing 29 people and injuring 15 others in a building and a restaurant before police shot him dead.

BOGOTA — "Violence" that had been commonplace in this Andean country for the past three decades and had for periods been contained but never quite wiped out is back in business. Political or criminal assassinations, kidnappings, disappearances, peasants massacred, almost daily guerrilla acts of sabotage and attacks on military posts, summary executions blamed on various paramilitary groups or hired guns working for big-time drug traffickers . . . Less than four months after Liberal Virgilio Barco's accession to the Presidency, Colombia is facing a startling recrudescence of violence right across society.

Given the present nervous mood, it is not easy to distinguish the real thing from the fake, the "political" crime from the criminal offence. Neighbourhood thugs extort money from the local middle-class resident or the corner grocery store owner in the name of some "revolutionary organisation". Genuine guerrilla groups replenish their war chests by imposing revolutionary taxes on foreign — or publicly-owned businesses. In some areas, the guerrillas have become tax collectors, with drug traffickers in their sectors reluctantly paying their contributions for a right of passage or permission to grow coca.

It is difficult to say who is killing whom in this turbulent confusion of bloodletting, revolutionary lyricism and settling of scores. Violence in Colombia is primarily a basic, almost trivial, fact of life accepted by everyone though routinely condemned by the authorities, the political class, Church and intellectuals. "You've got to learn to live with it." The formula expresses both the fatalism and *the will to live of a* dynamic society which is not resigned to it but has no illusions about how this infernal cycle is going to end.

Violence which is typical erupted recently in a street in Medellin, the capital of Antioquia, which is the stronghold of big crime bosses. Three cars drew up one behind the other at a red light. The driver of the last vehicle impatiently sounded his horn. The driver of the first vehicle got out, calmly walked over to the second car wedged between the two and shot the innocent man dead. No police inquiry, no chase. Just a ripple of emotion and fear in the crowd and averted eyes.

People here kill out of a sense of honour, to steal of course, but also in defence, to intimidate and avenge. There are rules. A rich family which has already paid a ransom is theoretically safe: such a family is picturesquely described here as having acquired a "vacuna" — vaccination. If, in spite of this, the family is subjected again to blackmail — one of its members being kidnapped by guerrillas or bandits — it hits back by hiring professional killers to slay the presumed kidnappers. This is a fairly common scenario and it is referred to as the "vengeance of the vaccinated". Humour has not lost its rights in Colombia.

Assassinations of judges, drug busters, investigators, policemen, political leaders, beginning with those of the Patriotic Union (UP) — the registered name of the old Colombian Communist Party — which legally took its place in the Bogota Congress in 1985 following agreements concluded with Belisario Betancur's Conservative government; scores settled in blood between rival guerrilla groups, armed clashes between guerrillas and the military. It is a long list and covers a very complex field.

November was a black month for the second year running. In 1985, the M 19 attack on the capital's courthouse left 95 dead (including 11 judges) and bespattered the liberal and progressive reputation of Betancur's government. The provisional tally for November 1986 is worse still: at least 70 guerrillas killed in battle and as many soldiers, over 200 seriously wounded among the police; scores of small farmers caught up in the fighting, kidnapped or massacred; acts of sabotage — especially of oil installations — so serious that damage is estimated to be around $50 million and the president of the nationally-owned Colombian oil corporation, Ecopetrol, considers that "production is likely to be paralysed".

A Liberal leader — former President Alfonso Lopez Michelsen — declares, perhaps blackening the picture somewhat, that "geographically speaking, the country is in guerrilla hands." At any rate, he thinks that "larger and larger regions are slipping out of government control". Liberals and Conservatives, who have been quarrelling in parliament since Virgilio Barco became President, share the concern and the bewilderment. The Colombian Bishops' Conference published a long communiqué this month condemning "the worsening of subversive violence and the hateful phenomenon of terrorism and kidnappings". The Catholic Church believes that Colombian democracy is "again imperilled."

Where the guerrillas are concerned, the M 19, having lost leaders, credibility and face in the disastrously-botched November 6, 1985 assault on the Bogota courthouse, is no longer a front-line force. The ELN (National Liberation Army) is spearheading the guerrilla movement today. Until just two years ago it was a tiny, theoretically pro-Cuban group; since then the ELN has amassed considerable funds and broadened its bases. It is now the spearhead of the CNG (National Guerrilla Coordination), the umbrella organisation incorporating half a dozen armed movements — especially M 19, EPL (People's Liberation Army) and the native Quentin Lama self-defence group — that broke the truce arrangements with the Betancur government.

ELN is, or is supposed to be, led by a Catholic priest, Father Perez, who has split from his Church. In November it carried out sharp strikes in Oriental, Arauca, Santander and Antioquia provinces. Who is behind this 1986 version of the ELN? Cubans? Or perhaps Libyans and Middle East Islamic fundamentalists only too happy to bait, using guerrillas, a Colombian government too openly toeing the line set by the "Great Satan"? Western experts here consider that the CNG could easily muster 50,000 armed men and cause big problems for the Colombian army which is, however, trigger-happy and has several decades of experience in fighting the guerrillas.

In the short term, the most disturbing aspect of the violence is the spate of murders and attacks on officials of the Patriotic Union. Three hundred party members have been killed in recent months, among them a score of municipal councillors, four members of departmental legislatures, one member of the Bogota House of Representatives and a Senator.

Communist Party and Patriotic Union officials are publicly accusing paramilitary groups, who they allege are "never punished because the sense of fellowship among the armed forces works in their favour." They charge Barco's government with impotence in the face of a dangerous and tragic situation. Thirteen Patriotic Union Senators and Representatives boycotted Congress sittings for a fortnight and returned to their seats only last week after receiving assurances from the government. Many of them now have official armed bodyguards. They have all received death threats, like most of their fellow Congressmen who are expected to review, before the year end, the treaty with the US for extraditing drug traffickers.

"The real enemies of the Patriotic Union and the FARC (Colombian Armed Revolutionary Forces — the military arm of the Communist Party)," say Liberal and Conservative politicians, "are to be found on the hard left, not on the right or at the centre, as they claim. They are the uncompromising opponents of any pacification policy."

At any rate, this systematic "liquidation" of Patriotic Union officials is endangering the agreement concluded between Betancur's government and the FARC. Though it is the most powerful guerrilla organisation in the country, FARC has so far observed an armed truce. But its rank-and-file members are becoming restive, and some FARC fighters are again resorting to "boleto" — extortion.

Leaders of the Communist Party, which is now officially recognised, are trying hard to control FARC's military leaders; they refuse to condemn the regular army as an institution and point to small encouraging signs. For the first time a military court in Antioquia, acting on the governor's instructions, tried and imposed a stiff gaol sentence on a regular army officer found guilty of murdering six farmers. But they know very well that, along with many others, they are all marked for assassination.

(December 9)

Shortage of maths teachers

Continued from page 12

£700) a month, and a job as a trainee with IBM.

The most urgent thing is obviously to encourage more students to take up maths teaching. In the 1960s, the boom in the number of schoolchildren was dealt with by a pre-recruitment system involving the setting up of special institutes to train secondary school teachers. Education Minister René Monory recently admitted to the Chamber of Deputies that such a system "was worth looking into", for, he added, "good marketing is not enough."

The system has already been introduced for the recruitment of teachers in technological disciplines, where the shortage of teachers is even more critical. Candidates, who are recruited after two years at university, receive two years of paid training that will take them up to the CAPET, the competitive exam for technology teachers.

Such a system, if extended to mathematics, would make it possible to attract and train maths students by offering them both financial help and the virtual certainty of obtaining a job. The government ought to give priority to introducing this system: the first major wave of teachers going into retirement will gather momentum at the beginning of the 90s.

But even that may prove ineffective if another problem is not dealt with — the small number of *bacheliers* (school-leavers with a *bac*) in science. In the last 25 years, while the overall number of *bacheliers* has tripled, the proportion of them with a "C" *bac* has remained virtually unchanged.

Jean-Pierre Chevènement, when Education Minister in the Socialist government, sounded the alarm by calling on headmasters and teachers to do everything in their power to channel more pupils into the science options. The present minister, René Monory, is apparently about to follow suit.

Chevènement hoped to achieve this by diversifying the streaming system and by limiting the so-called "tyranny of mathematics". Monory, who shares his predecessor's hope of bringing "80 per cent of pupils to *baccalauréat* level by the year 2000", will shortly introduce a new maths-economics option and reduce maths lessons by one hour in the "C" and "E" options.

All this, no doubt, will be beneficial to some extent. But he will have to do much, much more if he really wishes to succeed in his ambition of rapidly re-establishing a proper balance between the literary and scientific grounding given by French schools.

(November 18)

COMMENT

Face-off in the isthmus

TWO NICARAGUAN towns have been bombed since Sunday, December 7, and major battles are going on in Honduras along the border between the two countries. Tension in this Central American isthmus has taken a new turn for the worse just when the Contadora group's attempts to bring peace to the region are becoming increasingly deadlocked.

This "state of war" coincides with the arrival of the $100 million of American aid voted by the US Congress for the Contras fighting Nicaragua's Sandinista government. In addition, the United States is giving direct ground support to the Honduran army in its face-off with the Nicaraguan forces. "Unscheduled exercises" took place a few days ago in the border region causing sharp concern among the people.

Once again this bombing, which Managua says has caused seven deaths, is sparking fears of a US attempt to intervene directly in Nicaragua in a bid to topple the Sandinista government. Managua, which has been announcing this periodically and saying that the "intervention plan" will be preceded by a clash between Honduras and Nicaragua, naturally uses the recent fighting to condemn this imminent aggression. Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto has even suggested that US aircraft carried out the attack.

In any case, the hardening responds to a change in the situation on the ground. The Honduran government flies in the face of the facts when it denies that anti-Sandinista guerrillas are operating from its territory. The increasing number of these guerrillas is the result, however, of restrictions imposed on them by Costa Rica's new President, Oscar Arias, who is against Americans using his landing strips to ferry weapons to the anti-Sandinistas. In this connection, the capture of Eugene Hasenfus, the American mercenary convicted in Nicaragua, brought to light the existence of a secret network for aiding the Contras. These disclosures have embarrassed quite a few Central American governments.

Can we expect a radical change in the American commitment in these circumstances, leading to a direct US-Nicaraguan clash via Honduras? Such a possibility would be surprising at the present juncture. Indeed, it would be extraordinarily risky for President Reagan who is currently involved in the crisis touched off by the arms sales to Iran.

But the risk of things getting out of hand cannot be ruled out. The Honduran President has pointed out that he sought logistical help from the United States "at the request of the armed forces". The latter have declared that the attacks will continue "until all the Sandinista troops have vacated Honduran territory". The two countries had until now kept up the pretence of entertaining relations with each other, but this has now disappeared.

The new escalation, which is forcing the Nicaraguan authorities to dig in and maintain the war effort, indeed permits little hope of the Central American conflict being settled peacefully in the foreseeable future.

(December 8)

Pasqua

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enmeshed up in a complicated diplomatic play that is dictating, indeed hampering, their activities; in law-and-order work, where there has been an attempt to downplay the death of a student by spotlighting the spectacle of depredations and the numbers injured in the ranks of the special units which are thereby made to look weak; and, finally, in the Carrefour du Développment case where the Minister of the Interior and his aides have dragged some police services, especially the DST, into a double game that the law can hardly tolerate.

(December 13)

Le Monde

Directeur: Andre Fontaine

The Washington Post

U.S. Supplied Intelligence Data To Iraq

By Bob Woodward

WASHINGTON — The information has been flowing to Iraq for nearly two years. During the same period, the Reagan administration was secretly selling arms to Iran in an effort to free the American hostages in Lebanon and gain influence with factions in the Iranian government.

In August, the CIA stepped up the initiative with Iraq by establishing a direct, top-secret Washington-Baghdad link to provide the Iraqis with better and more timely satellite information. One source with firsthand knowledge said the Iraqis receive the information from satellite photos "several hours" after a bombing raid in order to assess damage and plan the next attack. This source said the intelligence information is "vital" to Iraq's conduct of the war.

CIA Director William Casey met twice this fall — once in October and again in November — with senior Iraqi officials to make sure the new channel was functioning and to encourage more attacks on Iranian installations, the sources said.

Iraq has mounted a series of precision air attacks against Iran in recent months, concentrating on oil terminals, oil pumping stations and power plants — all with the intent of destroying Iran's economy and its ability to continue the war, which entered its seventh year this fall.

The revelation that the administration has been sharing intelligence data with the Iraqis at the same time that it was shipping arms to the Iranians raises new questions about the administration's policy on the Persian Gulf war. One well-placed U.S. government official said that the administration policy of arms for Iran and satellite intelligence for Iraq was "a cynical attempt to engineer a stalemate" in the war.

An administration official said Sunday that any intelligence assistance to Iraq was for "defensive" purposes, designed to keep either side from winning or losing the war. White House spokesman Daniel Howard said Sunday there would be no comment on this report. "We don't comment on intelligence matters," he said.

On Nov. 13, in his first detailed public statement on the Iranian affair, President Reagan said one of the key goals of his Iranian initiative was "to bring an honorable end to the bloody six-year war between Iran and Iraq." Denying a "tilt" in U.S. policy, Reagan said his administration did not favor or support "one side over the other."

Since the secret U.S.-Iranian arms deal was disclosed in early November, Iraq has stepped up its attacks. On Nov. 25, Iraqi warplanes bombed Iranian oil tankers at Lark Island, which is about 750 miles south of Iraq and in the strait of Hormuz. This was apparently the greatest distance flown by Iraqi planes in any raid during the war. On Dec. 5 the warplanes bombed Iran's Neka power station, which is located close to Iran's Soviet border.

On Saturday, Iraqi radio reported that its warplanes attacked Tehran for the first time in seven months, striking an antiaircraft defense system and a power plant, and in a separate raid hit troop concentrations and ammunition depots in northwestern Iran.

Intelligence estimates show that Iraq overall has at least a 4-to-1 advantage in the major types of military equipment including tanks, missiles, and combat aircraft. Iraq also has about 1 million regular ground troops compared with 250,000 regulars for Iran. Iran's population is roughly three times as large as Iraq's. The Iranians have used "human waves" of young, irregular soldiers in the war, which has claimed about 1 million dead, wounded or captured.

An administration official said that Iraq had been discouraged from any attempt to destroy Iran's economy. The United States had tried last year to apply diplomatic pressure on Iraq not to wipe out Iran's Kharg Island oil terminal. Several years ago, the Kharg Island terminal handled about 90 percent of Iran's oil; now it moves less than 50 percent.

In his Nov. 13 speech, Reagan said the administration opposed the violence of the Iran-Iraq conflict. "The slaughter on both sides has been enormous, and the adverse economic and political consequences for that vital region of the world have been growing," Reagan said. "We sought to establish communications with both sides in that senseless struggle, so that we could assist in bringing about a cease-fire and, eventually, a settlement. We have sought to be evenhanded by working with both sides . . . We have consistently condemned the violence on both sides."

Sources said that as far back as 1984, when some people feared that Iran might overrun Iraq, the United States began supplying Iraq with some intelligence assistance. Iraq reportedly used the intelligence to calibrate attacks with mustard gas on Iranian ground troops, distressing U.S. officials, who condemn chemical warfare.

But the sources said the information from U.S. satellites was not supplied regularly until sometime in early 1985. For the next 18 months the information was supplied through Washington channels as needed by the Iraqis, particularly after an Iraqi bombing raid.

It could not be established in what form the Iraqis initially received the intelligence data. Officials said it could have been actual intelligence satellite photos, or simply selected portions, artists' drawings done from the photos or detailed verbal descriptions.

The direct Washington-Baghdad link, established in August, was accomplished by way of a special intelligence unit in the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, one source said. Two sources said that the Iraqis now receive selected portions of the actual photos that are taken by U.S. reconnaissance satellites and, on some occasions, U.S. reconnaissance aircraft.

In mid-August, just after the direct channel was installed, Iraq executed a surprise bombing raid against the Iranian oil terminal at Sirri Island that Iran supposedly thought was safe from attack.

Arms Trade Is Trading In Lives

By Ellen Goodman

BOSTON — I have been waiting for a simple moral question to be raised about the president's deal with Iran. I am not talking about the morality of dealing with terrorists. Or the morality of lying to the American people and our allies. That's the easy stuff of ethics class: Morality I, fall semester.

What I've been waiting for is the media or the pollsters or the country to ask whether it is right for the president to swap American lives for Middle Eastern lives. And we now know, for Central American lives.

That is what happened. In the popular mind, the bleak policy, ordered by what Khomeini calls "The Black House," was an exchange of "arms for hostages". But that's much too sanitary a description. It conjures up an image of weapons stockpiled in a warehouse rather than the image of weapons used to kill people.

The arms themselves were classfied by the administration as "defensive". They consist, we are told, of some 2,000 antitank weapons and enough parts to repair 200 Hawk antiaircraft missiles. Antitank weapons. Antiaircraft weapons. These are also clean words. They sound as if the weapons were points at empty machinery.

But tanks and aircraft are not drones, run like a child's train set by remote control. There are people inside these tanks and aircraft, people who will die.

Even this calculated cluster of bodies does not make up the whole potential casualty list. The president swears that one objective of this arms deal is to bring to "an end that terrible war". But he has not shored up those "moderates" who want peace by giving arms to an ayatollah who will accept only victory. Somewhere between 350,000 and a million people have been killed so far in the six-year war. How many more deaths will be attributed to the swap? How many more in Nicaragua?

In an angry moment, Donald Regan demanded of the press: "What's a human life worth?" This, he said, is "what the president was thinking about" when he ordered the shipment.

It was a ripe question, but one that needs to be rephrased. What's an American life worth? Are three American hostages worth 100 Iraqis and Iranians? 500? 10,000? Does it make a difference if the dead are volunteers, drafted soldiers or civilians? Do we care if people are killing each other with our weapons?

The entire debate has been about credibility and damage control, about domestic management and international relations. Questions have been raised about a bumbling president and a rebellious staff. The focus last week was on duplicity, this week on loyalty. There is much being said about lame ducks and sacrificial lambs. But what about life and death? There have been headlines announcing the removal of Oliver North and John Poindexter. But what about life and death?

Is that too corny, too soft a question? It is left to the Iraqi ambassador to mention that these arms "will bring about more casualties," while Americans go on measuring the political impact of this fiasco on George Shultz or the Regan presidency or the next election.

If members of my own family were held hostage, I suspect that I would be capable of great violence to save them. If I were given the option of sacrificing strangers for loved ones, I might trade them by the dozen. I would be morally untrustworthy to make this decision.

Is this what happened to Reagan: that he perceived the hostages as family and the warring parties in the Middle East as strangers we could help kill each other without a qualm? Was he on safe moral ground because he only supplied the weapons, didn't push the buttons? Did he think about it at all?

In wartime, the absolute goal of one nation is to kill the largest possible number of the enemy to save any individual life. But we are not at war. My sense is that even in peacetime we have come to accept arms as a tool of American foreign policy like any other form of "foreign aid".

We sell them here, withhold them there, use them in exchange for friendship. Arms have become a kind of wampum. We have forgotten that their purpose is murder. It is easy to swap hostages for arms, if you forget that arms are agents of death.

This is the moral dilemma of this swap. In peacetime, is it right to ransom an American life with foreign lives? How many lives? "What is a human life worth?" I'm waiting, still waiting, for the subject to come up.

Contras Try To Regain Momentum

By Edward Cody

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras - As controversy rages in Washington over their funding, the U.S.-backed Nicaraguan rebels are preparing here for what Honduran and diplomatic officials call a last-chance attempt to breathe momentum into their anti-Sandinista guerrilla war.

Failure to expand the fighting significantly in the coming months and carry it from the border region to territory inside Nicaragua could mean the end of the five-year-old effort to overthrow the government in Managua, these officials said. They based their assessments on new doubts about support from Washington following the Iranian funds scandal, the growing unwillingness in Honduras to play host indefinitely to rebel training camps and rear bases and the refusal of Costa Rica, Nicaragua's other neighbor, to permit such bases to be set up there. "Now it's put up or shut up time," said one diplomat monitoring the insurgents.

With the first expenditures from $100 million in fresh aid, the United States has begun to assemble planes for a logistics network, equip rebel units with secure communications gear and increase standard military supplies such as guns, ammunition and uniforms, a knowledgeable official reported.

The first six dozen rebels trained in the United States are expected back here next month. Other groups will follow. Training also is under way in southern Honduras at the Military Instruction Center of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, the main guerrilla organization.

The military supplies from open U.S. aid recently began to flow through Honduras after a delay in deliveries that prompted public complaints from rebel leaders, according to an official source.

A leader of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, speaking privately, said U.S. and insurgent plans call for an increasing tempo of infiltration in the first four months of 1987 and a significant level of combat by midyear. "You will see some fighting by April, and then big actions by July," he predicted.

These plans were drawn up before the storm in Washington over diversion of Iranian arms sales money to support the contras. Since the disclosures, a sense of momentum that seemed to be building has shifted. But rebel and diplomatic sources asserted that they are trying to go ahead on schedule because to accelerate now would be a mistake militarily.

An independent diplomatic analyst cautioned, however, that the plans made by rebel leaders and their U.S. sponsors appear to be based on two assumptions that are open to question. The first, he said, is that U.S. funding and political support for the insurgency can survive the uproar in Washington over contacts with Iran and secret funding.

The opening test of this assumption is likely to come in February, when Congress must approve a second disbursement worth $40 million from the $100 million in aid approved last summer. The key test, however, comes in late spring, when U.S. officials acknowledge they will have to seek another large round of aid for the insurgency if it is to grow into a political reality through next year as they plan.

The second assumption, the skeptical diplomat said, is that the 10,000- to 12,000-man rebel force has the ability militarily to move into Nicaragua and sustain a guerrilla conflict there with the greatly expanded and better equipped Popular Sandinista Army.

The rebel force has had no presence inside Nicaragua large enough to threaten government control since 1984, when open U.S. funding was cut off. The only fighting of any dimension this year took place inside Honduras, where Sandinista soldiers attacked areas controlled by the Nicaraguan Democratic Force or sought to block off infiltration across the border.

Partly as a result of the fighting inside Honduras, the military and the civilian government here have grown increasingly impatient with the presence of rebel forces on their territory. President Jose Azcona said last week that he has told the United States Honduras wants to get rid of the rebels as soon as possible.

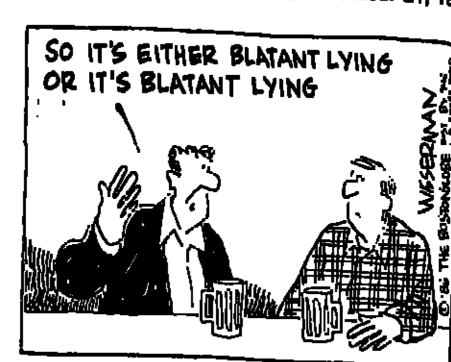
A high military officer who has dealt extensively with the rebels,

Continued on page 17









Aides Wonder If Reagan Can Cope Effectively

By Lou Cannon

WASHINGTON — When Secretary of State George Shultz testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee last week, the television audience only briefly included President Reagan. "The president, while he was dressing, watched a few minutes of Shultz and then came to a staff meeting," a White House official said. "He didn't go back to the tube."

As aides have described it, Reagan has distanced himself almost to the point of disinterest from the most threatening crisis of his presidency. He reinforced this impression in midweek when he quipped to reporters that his television viewing of the hearings was limited to times "when I can't find a ball game".

But some of those who have talked to Reagan about his problems see a darker side to the portrait of the confident, optimistic president that White House officials are attempting to put on display for outsiders. They say the crisis and Reagan's response to it have raised fundamental questions about the president's leadership ability and his celebrated hands-off style of management. Some Reagan confidants also wonder whether the 75-year-old president has either the vitality or the understanding to cope with the crisis over a protracted period.

"He lives in another world; some things he chooses to believe and some not to believe," said one source after a recent conversation with Reagan. "He thinks in a day or two or a week at most it's all going to be behind him."

This source thinks that Nancy Reagan has a far more realistic view of the long-term potential damage of the scandal. And presidential pollster Richard B. Wirthlin recently told the president that the crisis would continue for four to six months "at best", according to a senior White House official.

But in a week of damaging new disclosures by Shultz and Central Intelligence Agency Director William Casey, an effort by White House communications director Patrick Buchanan to blame the crisis on administration critics and an attempt by several longtime Reagan supporters to oust White House chief of staff Donald Regan, the president's watchword was "business as usual", according to his spokesmen.

While Regan remained closeted in his office, the president attended a round or parties for celebrities, members of Congress, the news media and his military and Secret Service staff. In these gatherings Reagan displayed his famous smile, made small talk and avoided any mention of the crisis that has removed the luster from his once-popular presidency.

He posed for pictures with representatives of the United Way and other volunteer groups, held a ceremonial meeting with Zaire's President Mobutu, and presided over a budget meeting where Attorney General Edwin Meese III and Office of Management and Budget Director James C. Miller III quarreled over the Federal Bureau of Investigation budget, with the president saying nothing. After a shouting match between Meese and Miller, the two compromised their differences and Vice-President Bush cut the tension with a joke, according to participants in the meeting.

A senior official described the week as "a lot of outreach" intended to demonstrate that the administration has not been crippled by the revelations of the secret arms sales to Iran as part of an effort to free American hostages in Lebanon and the disclosure that proceeds from this transaction were diverted to aid the Nicaraguan contras. In keeping with this strategy of trying to change the subject, Reagan on Friday presented a list of domestic policy proposals and declared: "We cannot, and we will not, let this stop us from getting on with the business of governing."

In the White House and on Capitol Hill, it is widely recognized that getting on with the business of governing is easier said than done. Some of the friends, aides and Republican members of Congress who have talked with the president are worried that Reagan underestimates the extent of damage to his credibility and the overwhelming public hostility to the U.S. providing arms to Iran for any reason.

A senior aide said Reagan is "frustrated that he doesn't seem to be believed". Another official said that Reagan seems "oppressed" by the unfolding scandal and a bit bewildered by the intense public attention that is being paid to it. One adviser said the president "doesn't understand why he isn't being praised" for urging aides to tell what they know about the circumstances that brought on the scandal.

During eight years as governor of California, four campaigns for the presidency and six years as president, Reagan prided himself on his credibility and his management skills. Less than three months ago he was described as especially pleased by a kindly cover story in Fortune magazine entitled, "What Managers Can Learn From Manager Reagan." The cover displays a confident Reagan and his prescription for good management: "Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority and don't interfere."

Whatever the ultimate judgments of investigators on the reasons and responsibility for the scandal, Reagan's predicament would seem to mock his managerial precepts. While some of Reagan's defenders have suggested that his proclivity for disengagement undergirds the claim that he didn't know about the diversion of money from U.S. arms sales to Iran to aid the contras who are fighting the government in Nicaragua, other Republicans think that Reagan's detachment compounds his credibility problems.

A Republican congressman familiar with the managerial styles of Presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Reagan thinks that Reagan's practice of establishing broad guidelines for others to carry out could make it more difficult for him to prove lack of involvement. "With Nixon, the only questions were what he knew and when he knew it," this Republican said. "With Reagan there are multiple possibilities."

In addition to Reagan knowing nothing or everything, among them are the possibility that he issued a limited grant of authority that was expanded by others, that he authorized something and then forgot it or that he established a general policy that he left to others to implement. Some administration officials said Reagan's grasp of substance is so tenuous that he is also capable of authorizing an action without realizing precisely what he has done.

Longtime advisers familiar with the president's work habits contend that chief of staff Regan's approach has made the president more prone to serious errors of decision-making in his second term. One of these advisers said that — in contrast to the popular belief that he is lazy — Reagan is "quite obsessive" when in the Oval Office and intent on going through the documents that have been placed on his desk. He does not welcome interruptions in this circumstance, this adviser said, and "might sign something very important that was placed before him and literally not remember it."

Reagan friends seeking changes in the White House since the scandal erupted have made Regan their principal target precisely because they understand how dependent the president is on his top staff, according to administration and congressional sources. But these sources said the president has come to rely on Regan so heavily that he has "dug in" against the attempt to force the staff chief's dismissal or resignation.

A White House insider said that even if the dramatic slide in the presiden't approval rating has stopped, Reagan faces the task of "recapturing the magic and imagination" of his presidency. His lofty goal of arms control and far-reaching domestic initiatives has been replaced with a modest list of proposals grouped around the idea of "competitiveness", which a strategist calls a "garbage can" for disconnected ideas.

Morale is also low in many corners of the White House. A number of middle-level and low-level aides are making inquiries about employment prospects outside the administration. Aides said that, in private, Reagan sometimes blames his trouble on the press or "liberal" critics, echoing the argument made publicly by Buchanan.

Most importantly, an aide said, Reagan faces the prospect of being "slowly ground down" by an investigative process that is likely to consume much of 1987, despite the president's expressed desire to get beyond the Iran arms sales and the contra-aid connection and deal with other issues. "As it slowly dawns on the president — if it does — that his explanations on Iran won't wash, he is likely to lose faith in the process and in himself," a longtime friend said. "This would be disastrous for him."

Evacuees Long For Chernobyl Homes

By Gary Lee

ZDVYZHEVKA, U.S.S.R. — Dislodged from her lifelong home by April's nuclear accident at Chernobyl, Anastasia Remizenko, 73, stood in the yard of her new house here, pining for an elusive warmth. Evacuated to this newly built settlement 45 miles from the damaged Chernobyl reactor, she has been pampered by the Soviet government with special relief measures: a well-heated brick house, food shipments safeguarded against radiation and regular medical checkups.

"But I am old," Remizenko said, tugging her scarf to guard against a brisk wind. "I miss the old wood stove where I used to curl up at night. These houses don't have them," she added, waving to the brick dwelling where she lives with her son's family. "They are warm, but it's not the same thing."

Remizenko and other evacuees from the Chernobyl area are adjusting to life in this small town of several hundred freshly completed brick houses just over an hour's drive from the damaged nuclear facility. Their struggle illustrates the lingering consequences of the nuclear accident.

With access into the 18-mile evacuated area around the damaged plant still tightly restricted, and radiation levels in the nearby city of Kiev registering twice the normal background level, efforts to decontaminate the area, including restrictions on food and traffic into the city, are evident everywhere.

But for the 135,000 residents evacuated after the April 26 accident, coping with the consequences of the accident is as much a matter of emotional adjustment as dealing withthe threat of radiation.

Like Remizenko, many of the evacuees, faced with the possibility that radiation damage has deprived them of their homes forever, have fixated longingly on some small thing they left behind.

For Natalia Romanchenko, a mother of four, it was the books she had to leave in the rush of evacuation May 5, nine days after the accident. For Dmitri Razymenko, it was something more primal.

"There was a certain smell of the earth there," said the collective farm manager of his native Zalesie, about a mile from the town of Chernobyl. "And there was the forest."

According to Anatoly Romanenko, the Ukrainian health minister, some of the evacuees, and workers now employed at the Chernobyl facility, have suffered psychological shock from the accident, resulting in disturbed dreams, "feelings of fear" and nervous tension. For older evacuees, Romanenko said in an interview, it has meant an impatient wait to return. "If I am invited back," said a middle-aged construction engineer from the town of Chernobyl, "I would gladly return."

Although 209 of the workers who went to the plant immediately after the explosion and fire remain hospitalized, none of the evacuees suffers from radiation illnesses, Romanenko said. In a flat dismissal of rumors that lingering radiation has caused illnesses among some evacuees, Lydmila Zdanevich, evacuated from Pripyat, near the reactor, said she and her friends all "feel fine".

And yet, Zdanevich said she goes for a blood test every 10 days or so, three times more often than the Ukrainian Health Ministry recommends. "Some women are very emotional," Romanenko explained, "and want more frequent checkups, to be reassured."

But even in some areas of Kiev, 80 miles from the site of the accident, residents drop in for blood tests, too, according to a Kiev medical official. "The psychological trauma is not yet past."

This month Ukrainian officials decided to use water supplies from the Dnieper River for the first time since the accident occurred, Nikolai Lavrykin, deputy director of the Kiev executive committee, said in an interview.

Early fears that the Dnieper, the main source of water in the Ukraine, could be contaminated led officials to restrict water use to supplies from artesian wells or the Dispa River, Lavrykin said. But he said the recent move did not preclude the possibility that the Dnieper water supplies would be barred from public consumption sometime in the future.

Radiation levels in Kiev are still reading .04 milliroentgens per hour in some parts of the city, or twice the background level before the accident, Romanenko said. The city's background radiation would not return to its former level until next May.

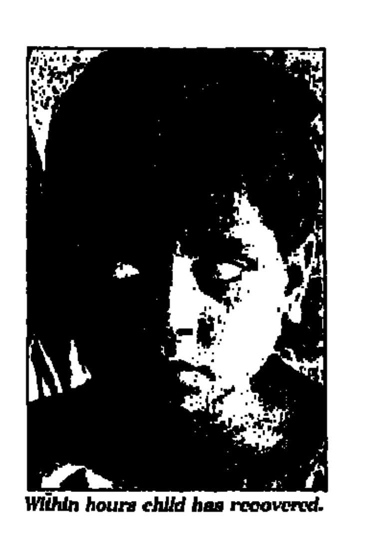
At eight entrance points in Kiev, the Ukrainian capital of 2.5 million people, workers use a dosimeter to measure radiation on vehicles. Cars and trucks with more than .02 milliroentgens per hour are turned back for washing, Lavrykin said. One of the two roads to Chernobyl from Kiev is restricted to residents of the area, or service vehicles travelling to or from the Chernobyl area, a local official said.

In Kiev's central market, produce is run through a dosimeter for a final check before it is offered for sale. But fears persist that some radioactive foods will creep through. The city has lifted its ban against black currants, and Health Minister Romanenko said he has taken to eating them just to prove that they are safe.

"Apples, apples, without radiation," shouted a vendor at the central market, prompting questions from shoppers about whether she could prove her claim.


A child with diarrhoeal dehydration.


Mother gives child simple rehydration solution. Cost: 10 cents.


Within hours child has recovered.

Pretoria Directly Blamed For Child Deaths In Southern Africa

By Blaine Harden

NAIROBI, Kenya — South African "destabilization" in Mozambique and Angola is directly responsible for creating the highest child death rates in the world, according to a senior official of the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Dr. Mary Racelis, regional director for UNICEF in eastern and southern Africa, said here last week that since 1980 South African-sponsored destruction of health clinics, intimidation of health workers, dislocation of families and widespread razing of crops has caused "unprecedented" death rates for children under 5 years in Angola and Mozambique.

Racelis cited recent UNICEF surveys in those two countries, both of which are battling South African-supported rebel armies, showing that between 33 and 38 percent of children die before they reach age 5. In the Tete region of west-central Mozambique, Racelis said the child death rate was 45 percent in 1984-85.

Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, where about 33 percent of children die before age 5, previously has been cited by UNICEF as the country with the highest child mortality rate.

Child death figures for southern Africa were made available here in conjunction with the release of UNICEF's annual "State of the World's Children" report, which marks the 40th anniversary of the organization. The 1987 report, as compared to recent years marked by severe famine in Africa, draws a relatively hopeful scenario for the survival of children in poor countries.

"We have, for the first time, the knowledge and means to defeat infection and undernutrition among the world's children on a massive scale and at an affordable cost," according to the report by James P. Grant, UNICEF's executive director.

The report said that in the past year low-cost methods, such as immunization and oral rehydration therapy for children with diarrhoea, have saved the lives of an estimated 1.5 million children under 5.

If immunization and oral rehydration were universally available in developing countries, the report said, about half the 14 million annual deaths of children under 5 could be prevented.

"The real challenge is therefore no longer scientific or technical," the report said. "It is political and social. It is the challenge of generating the political will and the social organization to put today's knowledge to use on the necessary scale and at an affordable cost."

The report, however, was not so sanguine about the capacity of developing countries, especially those in Latin America and Africa, to afford to pay for even low-cost preventive health care for children. It said that in the past five years average income in Latin America has fallen by 9 percent and in Africa by 15 percent. As a result, the report said, "deteriorating health and nutrition is widespread" among young children in Latin America and Africa.

The UNICEF report charged that economic "adjustment" policies adopted to satisfy International Monetary Fund requirements had reduced per capita spending on health and education in these Latin American and African countries. It questioned "whether it makes either human sense or economic sense to sacrifice the growing minds and bodies of the next generation on the altar of adjustment policy."

UNICEF called on industrialized countries, which it said now contribute 0.36 percent of their total gross national product in aid to developing countries, to increase their contributions so poorer countries can afford to implement child health services that have proved cheap and effective.

The report said that, by and large, the past three decades have been a "period of "spectacular progress for children; between 1950 and 1980 child death rates fell by 50 percent; average life expectancy rose by 30 percent; food production trebled and school enrollment rates doubled."

The child health crisis in war-crippled Mozambique and Angola, as described by UNICEF's Dr. Racelis, is a bleak exception to that record of progress.

Citing a preliminary southern Africa report that she said will be released in more complete form by UNICEF early next year, Racelis said it is clear that child mortality has increased dramatically in the past five years as a result of South African "destabilization measures." The percentage of children dying before their fifth birthday is between 10 percent and 15 percent higher now in Angola and Mozambique than it was in 1980, according to figures she quoted.

South Africa helps fund and has used its soldiers to support UNITA rebel forces in Angola under the command of Jonas Savimbi. It also has been accused of aiding antigovernment insurgents in Mozambique in violation of a nonaggression pact it signed with that country in 1984.

In Mozambique, according to the UNICEF report cited by Racelis, rebels have destroyed 718 health centers since 1981. Health workers, the report says, have been wounded, maimed, murdered and kidnapped in a campaign to keep them from traveling to rural areas. About 300,000 school children have been affected by the destruction of their schools, the report says.

In Angola, according to the southern Africa UNICEF report, 141,000 children under 5 died in 1984-85.

To put the collapse of child-health services in Angola and Mozambique in an African context, Racelis compared the curve of child mortality figures in those two countries over the past five years with that of Tanzania, a similarly poor but peaceful country in southern Africa.

In 1980, Tanzania had a child mortality rate comparable to that of Angola and Mozambique — about 260 deaths per 1,000 live births. Last year, Tanzania's rate was 183 deaths. But the figure in Angola and Mozambique was between 325 and 375, according to UNICEF.

Mortality Could Be Halved

UNICEF estimates that the child mortality rate could be halved by launching an attack on disease and malnutrition using four simple and cheap techniques.

1. The oral rehydration treatment (ORT), a combination of salt and sugar, could prevent three million children dying every year of diarrhoeal dehydration. And the treatment costs less than ten cents a child.

2. Regular monitoring of children. This provides mothers and health care workers with an explicit record of the child's physical development and an opportunity to discuss health practices.

3. Promoting "breast is best" to combat malnutrition.

4. Immunisation against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, measles, poliomylitis and tuberculosis. UNICEF, together with 74 governments, are committed to achieve universal child immunisation by 1990. It could save five million children.

These life-saving measures rely not on specialists or hospitals, but on primary health care workers and village volunteers who need a few months training on the basics of health, hygiene and disease before they can begin work.

Contras Try To Regain Momentum

Continued from page 15

and who strongly opposes the Sandinista government, declared that the rebel movement must take more "ideals" into Nicaragua along with U.S.-provided weapons.

To provide political leadership and "charisma," the top leadership of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force also should go inside Nicaragua with its men instead of spending time in Tegucigalpa and Miami, he said, adding: "I know that if I were there and someone told me to go into Nicaragua to fight, I would say to them to come down from Miami and go with me."

Although detailed U.S. planning remains secret, comments from U.S. and rebel officials indicate a goal of establishing enough insurgent military and political presence in Nicaragua during 1987 to elicit popular opposition to the Sandinista government.

This also fits in with the need to relieve Honduras of its role as host to the rebels and to establish the insurgency as a politically attractive cause in the United States quickly enough to secure continued funding from Congress.

But a European diplomat following the rebels here said a long-term guerrilla war, perhaps a decade, would be a more likely way to build political strength inside Nicaragua. The catch is that the Nicaraguan rebels are dependent on U.S. funding and leadership, while the U.S. probably does not have the patience for such an effort.



Life In Gorky

By Jonathan Yardley

ALONE TOGETHER by Elena Bonner. Translated by Alexander Cook. Knopf. 270pp. $17.95.

IT IS well known that Elena Bonner came to the United States from the Soviet Union in December of 1985 to have open heart surgery and to visit her mother, children and grandchildren, who live in Massachusetts; she had been granted a three-month visa — it later was extended an additional three months — after years of pleading with the mysterious mandarins of the Kremlin, pleas that included two hunger strikes by her husband, Andrei Sakharov, the distinguished physicist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. What has not been known until now is that while she was in this country, Bonner somehow found time, amid surgery and family obligations and various public appearances, to write a memoir of her six years with Sakharov in "internal exile" at Gorky; now, only five months after her departure from the United States, that memoir is at hand.

It is necessary to say that Alone Together is not a work of art. Bonner wrote it in haste, not to mention distracting circumstances, and had no time to review or edit her manuscript; this was done by her son-in-law, Efrem Yankelevich. Not surprisingly, the organization of the memoir leaves a good deal to be desired; much space is devoted to setting the record straight about various controversies with the Moscow government, relatively little to the personal details about which readers are understandably curious. Bonner is not a professional writer and her prose, though it often aches with emotion, rarely rises above the pedestrian. Viewed in purely literary or even journalistic terms, Alone Together is the work of an amateur.

But that is scarcely the point. What matters is that Alone Together speaks to us directly from the source, from that tiny apartment in Gorky where Bonner and Sakharov have become international symbols of the struggle for human rights. It is a powerful, moving book precisely because of its artlessness, because it comes to us unadorned with anything except its author's urgent need to tell the truth as she sees it — to strip away not merely the lies and slanders of the Soviet government, but also the sentimentality with which she and Sakharov have been *smothered* by their admirers in the West.

Although Bonner ranges over a broad period of time in these recollections, she concentrates on the three years, beginning in 1983, not covered in Sakharov's own memoirs, which — it was recently announced — have somehow been smuggled to the West and will be published by Knopf at an unspecified future date. It is not, as she warns at the outset, a sunny tale.

"I have very little time, and I do not have much strength. I do not want to remember. I want to forget, because the life we live (in Gorky) is so different from the normal life in general and life here (in the United States). The story is not a happy one, and it is hard to make it entertaining. These are not memoirs — everything is too near and too painful for that to be the case. A diary would be good here, but in our life it is impossible to write a diary; it is bound to end up in the wrong hands. More than anything else, this is a chonicle. Since I do not have the time to turn it into what could be called a book, let those who want to read it treat it accordingly."

The story is about how two people have attempted, with remarkable success, to maintain their dignity, sanity and strength against a state-orchestrated campaign of physical and psychological intimidation. This has included the involuntary hospitalization of Sakharov, following his hunger strikes, during which he has been subjected to the degradation of force-feeding; the trial and conviction of Bonner on manufactured charges of anti-Soviet activity; a slanderous attempt to impugn Bonner's reputation and, by association, Sakharov's; daily harassment by KGB operatives, police and other emissaries of the Kremlin; forged postcards and telegrams to Bonner's family in Massachusetts; and the production of falsified films, for the edification of the West, in which Sakharov and Bonner are depicted as leading idyllic lives. Of these films Bonner writes:

"It is horrible to live under the all-seeing eye of the telescreen (as in Nineteen Eighty-Four). These films come out of Orwell's Ministry of Truth. Each of them is designed to show and prove to the viewer something concrete, whatever it is that the government needs at a given moment. First Sakharov is well, then he's sick, then he's not on a hunger strike, then he's resting, then he's freely receiving treatment, then he is driving around somewhere, then his wife is free to go abroad, and so on. The truth of individual scenes is made to support the lie required at that moment. The films do not differ from the announcements of TASS and Novosti Press Agency."

The account that Bonner gives of life in these conditions is almost incomprehensible to the reader accustomed to the ordinary freedoms of Western life. The only liberties that she and Sakharov enjoy are those of thought and intimate speech; otherwise their every activity is monitored and controlled by the bureaucrats and petty officials whose full-time occupation is to observe and harass them. They are routinely attacked in the press, ostracized in the streets; only in the company of their closest and most trusted friends, whom they see infrequently, can they relax and be themselves — and too often they discover, as anecdote after anecdote reveals, that a friend is not, after all, a friend. Their life is a nightmare. That these two people have managed to hold onto their self-respect and humor is something of a miracle.

Bonner devotes relatively little of her chronicle to her stay in the United States, but these few pages are heartbreaking. This was "My American vacation," a six-month respite from repression during which Bonner experienced, for the only time in her life, the joys of freedom. Though American readers will do well to resist smugness as they read about Bonner's visit here, there can be no question that in the United States she found true happiness. "I maintain that Americans do not want war," she writes. "What Americans want is a house." Then, in what is perhaps the book's most poignant paragraph, she writes during a brief stay in Florida:

"I also want a house. As I write, I am leaving an island. My time here has been a highlight of my entire life. I had never been in a climate like this, near palm trees — coconuts really do fall — my bare feet had never felt sand like this; the warm and quiet sea splashed just twenty steps away from me. I would call it paradise, but paradise is not simply a question of climate, or sand, or sea, or even apples . . . Paradise is being with people you love and treasure and not worrying about them. I wish Andrei were here. I wish my mother could sit in a rocker in the shade near those sweet, sleep-inducing oleanders, and I wish I could pick up the phone once a week and hear the calm voices of my children. Paradise, it turns out, is so simple and, it turns out, unattainable for me."

That is because she went back, to Sakharov and to Gorky: "It takes incredible will-power to force yourself to learn once again how to breathe without air, swim without water, walk without ground," but she has done it. She has returned out of love, first, but, although she does not say so, surely out of moral duty as well; her life's work is there, not here, and her commitment to it is every ounce as strong as her husband's, so in truth she had no choice except to go back into the sanitized *gulag* that is Gorky. She is there now, with Sakharov, alone together, strong in the knowledge that "beyond the border which separates us from the world and from all of you, dear family and friends, we are still free to be ourselves."

An Airman Foresees His Death

By Paul West

WARTIME WRITINGS 1939-1944. By Antoine De Saint-Exupéry. Translated from the French by Norah Purcell. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 201pp. $12.95.

ONLY a few feet above the runway, he sees the ground lights vanish and knows there is something big right in front of him. Captain Saint-Exupéry pushes forward on the stick. The plane nosedives, its wheels hitting hard, then rebounds back into the air over a truck that is carrying, of all things, a spare floodlight. Tonight, though, the floods are out while the pilots of Group 2/33 practice night landings. The only lights are faint, there to reveal the landing axis. Saint-Exupéry has saved his life, his co-pilot's and the truckdriver's by doing something he learned when flying air mail before the war. It is January 12, 1940. There are no stars.

A letter to an unidentified eyewitness follows, in which Saint-Exupéry chides himself for acting foolishly but explains, "I was very tense," and muses on the pastness of things past before getting back to his near-miss on landing. "Injustice," he writes, "is the irretrievable." It is the "gouging out of the eyes". It is also "the sight of the black truck thirty feet from me as I sped toward it at 110 miles an hour. And I 'should have' pulled the stick back in order to clear it . . . I had not a hundredth of a second to think it over. The surest reflex had come into play . . . For you, the plane was visible, since it was vaguely lit up. But for me, dazzled by the lights, all the rest was darkness. When I chose to hit the ground in order to bounce over it, I had the impression of burrowing into the earth up to my midriff before leaping over. I left a dip in the ground behind me, like a nest molded in my shape. But I didn't know what I had hatched in that nest. I didn't know what I should find in the rounded mold of my chest. And since those idiots took their time before switching on the floodlights again, I thought: There it is . . . I've killed them all." Although he claims that what's done is done, he keeps on going back to the same incident, for a day or two at least, even while driving his car. He curses "the inertia of the material world," but only four days later moves with his group to a new airfield.

He still has not flown a single military mission. His fellow-officers think he is too old at 39. The author of *Night Flight* and *Wind, Sand and Stars*, he has already won a couple of France's most prestigious literary prizes and, despite his inexperience at aerial warfare, ranks as one of the world's master-pilots: a genius at survival in desert and over ocean; a brooding, metaphysically-minded monk *manqüe*, as apolitical as he is hypersensitive, as patriotic as he is compassionate. He hates the 20th century, not so much for its ingenuities as for its materialism, its conveyor-belts, its lack of pride in its agrarian, pastoral heritage. In fact he is something of a Luddite, this would-be combatant who complains that his fellow-fliers mollycoddle him because they think his white beard will get tangled among the controls of his Lockheed Lightning photo-reconnaissance ship. He is, all through his letters, touchy, acerbic, lyrical, lonely, a poet of the stratosphere who, long before the notion becomes fashionable, realizes that we all live on the same small planet with nowhere else to go.

If you want him in action, as on January 12, 1940, here he is, looking back on a pre-war crash landing in Libya; refusing to fly bombers; forgetting to switch on his electrically heated flying boots at 35,000 feet; noting that "where you breathe ice" breath turns into thin needles inside the oxygen mask; inventing and patenting an altimeter device; stealing a four-engine Farman at Bordeaux and flying 40 young pilots to continue the war in North Africa.

Illness dogs him. An old injury to a bone near the optical nerve makes his eye flare up. Wood splinters from a 1923 crash have given him septicemia. Inexplicable fevers beset him. He goes off to America, where he fumes, and then he returns to Europe aboard a troop ship, talking incessantly to a Jungian psychiatrist. He takes a drink with a couple of bargemen. He eats fried fish and creamed chicken. Within the space of one year, he changes base 12 times (Morocco, Tunis, Algiers, Casablanca, Naples, Alghero, and so on). On August 1, 1943, he has engine trouble, overshoots the field, and slightly scrapes a wing. He slips on some stairs and breaks his back. Recovered, and flying over Annécy, he has mechanical trouble at the precise moment he turns 44, pursued by German fighters. Only the day after telling this to a friend in a letter, he goes up again, for "MAPPING EAST OF LYON", and does not come back. "Saint-Ex." dies on July 31, 1944, 11 days after Stauffenberg's futile bomb goes off in Hitler's East Prussian HQ.

There are other Saint-Exupérys, however, one a swift shaper of indelible images, less ponderous than the philosophizer of *Citadelle*, less hokey than the author of *The Little Prince*. He notes "the pathetic nature of the plane," how vulnerable it is: something between contraption and greyhound. A man can explode at 35,000 feet but never "enter into another person". He loves wood fires and icy beds. Disliking too many creature comforts, he prefers his lodgings to evoke "that atmosphere of the bear hunt". In his frequent vein of manual voluptuousness, he insists that "the carpenter should plane his board as if it were essential to the earth's rotation". He deplores a generation with no spiritual values beyond "the bistro, mathematics, and the Bugatti" and yearns for the monastery of Solesmes. He considers weeping against a tree and writes in a petulant rage.

He seems almost to be cracking up in at least a tenth of his letters, but he always bucks up again, assigning himself a complex puzzle in math or changing his mind about high altitude — he likes it because it's uncluttered, he dislikes it because it's empty. Thinking of Vichy France, he decides that "an organism creates its own anal passage."

Sometimes in these writings he can be a bit of a bore, windily going on about De Gaulle (who always thwarted him) or the American view of the French view of America, or the French view of the American view of France, all of it dusty stuff not worth culling from wherever it moldered. I don't have the French to hand (some of it would be hard to find, even), but Norah Purcell's generally readable version sometimes gets out of tune: "How much heavy a train must be!,' which is not English at all, or, especially in such a polemic as "An Open Letter to Frenchmen Everywhere," limp: "This blackmail ought to be despised." Under political and social pressure, Saint-Ex. could get banal, but, when you are low over the runway with a truck in front of you, whom would you rather have in the left-hand seat?

Paul West's most recent novel is "Rat Man of Paris". His memoir, "Words for a Deaf Daughter," has just been reissued.

Cat in the manger

By Ralph Whitlock

WHEN, armed with secateurs, I strode down the orchard to collect the Christmas mistletoe, I was well aware that my long-deceased great-grandfather had planted it on the old apple tree on which it still flourishes, and so I was not really surprised to find him sitting on a sawing-horse where his cider press used to stand.

"Keeping up the tradition, I see," he remarked, then added, "*You* ought to get some mistletoe started, for *your* great-grandson to harvest."

"It's a thought," I agreed.

"Yes, and one you'll have forgotten about when the proper time comes, March."

"I know."

"No good trying to get mistletoe berries to set at Christmas-time," he went on, determined to impart this bit of remembered lore, whether it was superfluous or not. "March is the time. The berries are ripe then. I just rubbed some into the rough bark in that fork there, one March, and there the plant still is."

I gathered my quota of mistletoe shafts and then sat for a while, in silent communion with the old boy.

"Vicar would never have mistletoe in church," he stated, after a bit. "Thought it was heathenish. Still, I never grew it for him. I grew it to sell."

"What a turmoil it used to be, getting ready for Christmas," he remembered, looking right through me at some scene long past. "Fatstock to groom up for the Christmas sale. Turkeys to pluck and draw and truss. We used to have about fifty of 'em, and Mother, she and the womenfolk would draw and truss 'em all.

"And geese. I used to hate pluckin' them. The fatter they were the easier it was to tear their flesh, and them there little feathers were fixed on wi' wire. And holly. I used to send a couple of cart-loads, tied down tight, to town. There were some good holly bushes then, all along that big hedge what was grubbed up a few years back. Waste, that's what it was. Waste and lack of forethought. You could sell that holly for a good price now, I 'llow, if you had it."

I had to agree.

"Twas an anxious time, too, with all that stuff on hand in the weeks afore Christmas. All that was needed was a blizzard to block the roads, and we were up to our neck in the midden. I mind one year we had to take all that poultry to market in hampers slung pannier-like over the hosses' backs. All across the fields, where the wind had swept the snow into the lanes and hedges. What a jaunt!

"Aye, that was the year when, last thing at night on Christmas Eve, I went across to the buildings, same as usual, to see that everything was bedded down comfortable for the night, and there was old Blossom, started to calve. I waited for a bit, to make sure she was doing all right, and it wasn't long afore I could see she wasn't.

Rembrandt etching Adoration of the Shepherds with the lamp — no cat.

"I went back over home, had a drink of Mother's hot punch and fetched young Morris out to give me a hand. He was living with us then, not being yet married.

"T'was after eleven o'clock when we went across the yard to the barn. The snow wasn't much thicker then than a covering of lime on a ploughed field. The blizzard snow had melted a day or two earlier and this was a new lot, but I could tell there wasn't any more to come for a time. It was too clear and frosty for that. The snow and the frozen muck crunched underfoot, and there was a bright, intense moon to make it all sparkle. So bright we hardly needed the lantern.

"I'd turned old Blossom into one of the loose stalls in the stable, to make her comfortable and give her plenty of space. We hanged the lantern on a hook, fetched a bucket of water for when she needed it, and settled down to watch till we were needed. T'was long enough it seemed, but bimeby we got to work . . . and hard work it was, too. I mind we were stripped off, with our shirt sleeves rolled up, and sweating away, we were, although twas such a frosty night. There was a good deal of heaving and pulling, and a lot of moaning from old Blossom, but presently it was all over. We had a nice bull calf . . . a big un, too.

"We littered up the stall with fresh straw, gave the old cow a drink and watched her lick the calf clean. We were feeling pretty pleased with ourselves. Then we heard the church clock start to strike midnight, and an idea suddenly occurred to me.

"Here, young Morris," I said. "Here's your chance to see whether there's owt in the old tale."

"What's that?" he asks.

"Well, they do say that at midnight on Christmas Eve the cattle, horses and sheep all kneel down to pay their respects to the newborn Christ-child. Now we shall see."

"So while the clock chimed we looked around the barn. Old Blossom wasn't in the mood to do much kneeling, but the other animals didn't show any signs of it, either. The other cows tied up in their stalls were mostly lying down, chewing their cud. The horses stood patient, sound asleep with their eyes open. One or two of the pigs grunted contentedly. Only one animal showed any sign of interest, and that was the cat. She poked her head over the side of the manger, where she had her nest, got up, stretched herself, looked curiously around and then went back to sleep again.

"I don't reckon she was kneeling," grinned Morris.

"But I didn't answer him direct, because a thought struck me. In all these Christmas plays we've seen and all the Christmas stories we've heard, we've never heard mention of a cat. And there must have been one. Whoever heard of a stable without a cat in the manger?"

So I pass on the thought to all producers of Nativity Plays. An authentic though neglected character for them to bring in. The cat in the stable at Bethlehem.

Always the right script — for fifty years

John Ezard on how the Queen Mother has survived with style

DID she truly — one night at Clarence House when the footmen were late bringing her nightcap — phone to say, "I don't know what you two old queens are doing down there, but this old Queen is dying of thirst"?

Did she genuinely say, in 1940 when the first of seven bombing raids damaged Buckingham Palace, "I'm glad. Now at last I can look the East End in the face"? And did the policeman she was talking to really remark, of the German pilot's low-level approach up the Mall, "A magnificent piece of bombing, ma'am, if you'll pardon my saying so"?

Did Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, who last week celebrated the 50th anniversary of her accession to the throne, actually reply when it was urged that her daughter should join the flight of other rich children to Canada, "They will not leave me. I will not leave the King — and the King will never leave"?

That, at least, is the tabloid press version of this vow. A more scholarly version, which the Guardian will use in her eventual obituary, goes, "The children will not leave unless I do. I shall not leave unless their father does; and the King will not leave the country in any circumstances."

The answer to all these queries is that "There is just no way of telling any more," according to the Queen Mother's press spokesman, Major John Griffin. She couldn't precisely remember words she spoke 40 years ago; and everyone to whom she said them is long dead.

With her, still ploughing exultantly through 120 public engagements a year at the age of 86, affectionate hagiography reigns supreme. Some of the unusually bountiful quotes attributed to her read as if scripted by her actorish friends, Ivor Novello and Noel Coward, or by Laurence Olivier in his younger Agincourt mode. For historians and a few of the rest of us, obstinately anxious to distinguish between real person, valid legend and candy-floss, that is vexing.

In fairness, she always has been not only wittier than her bland manner would suggest but the cause of wit in others. And, whatever she said, the point — which is also part of the basis for the depth of feeling behind the hagiography — was that she and King George VI did stay in London with the girls, exhausting themselves in travels totalling tens of thousands of miles to bombed towns. A Canadian woman sent her a poem, "Be it said to your renown/That you wore your gayest gown and stayed in town/When London Bridge was falling down".

She was Queen for less than 15 years until her husband's death in 1952 — a role which, like the acclaim she has enjoyed ever since, was unthinkable when she was born as Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon into a minor Scots aristocratic family with its seat at Macbeth's castle, Glamis.

Her father, disgusted by the philandering and drinking of the Prince of Wales, declared, "If there is one thing I have determined for my children, it is that they shall never have any sort of post about the Court."



King George, Queen Elizabeth and Winston Churchill inspect bomb damage at Buckingham Palace in 1940. "Now I can look the East End in the face . . ."

In 1922 the Duke of York sent his parents the most pathetic telegram ever wired by a royal prince: "It's all right! Bertie." He meant that Elizabeth had accepted him, stammer, depressions, and apparently hopeless diffidence and all, after several rejections. She was, like everyone who has married into the family since, "afraid never, never again to be free to think, speak and act as I really ought to".

When the abdication brought what she called the "intolerable honour of being queen," she told the children, "We must make the best of it". And, although she must have a negative side which will emerge in posthumous biographies, no one in 59 years has seriously suggested she ever did less than that. Strength of character, and the resolutely uncomplicated faith of many women of her generation, got her through.

With her husband and King George V, she is one of the great moulders of the 20th century monarchy, successfully establishing Bagehot's notion "that it is natural to have a virtuous sovereign". Her private keepsake, from deeper reading than the hagiographers suggest, is a phrase of William Blake's: "Labour well the Minute Particulars, attend to the little ones/and those who are in misery cannot remain so, long."

Her early impact was colossal as the first princess this century to smile in public. Her real successor is the Princess of Wales. Watching Diana last month flinching at the relentless hours of exposure to cameras during her Gulf tour, it was natural to think of her husband's grandmother and wonder, How can any girl face the prospect of 50 years of that?

The answer is, with difficulty. But if you survive it with your heart and your marbles intact, and with little except a yen for gin-and-tonic, you become a legend.

A stirrer among the Establishment

Martin Pawley meets the new President of the Royal Institute of British Architects

SOMETHING happened to the Royal Institute of British Architects last week that is the professional equivalent of rape. The selection of the president, normally a gentlemanly affair that has only been contested three times in the last 150 years, suddenly turned into a nasty mud-slinging contest with the official candidate denouncing his opponent as a charlatan and second-hand car dealer and calling for the Prince of Wales to stop taking his advice.

All to no avail, for Macclesfield architect and community entrepreneur Rod Hackney, director of more than 50 companies and master of a turnover of £4 million a year, took the title at a run with a handy majority of 1,500 votes and now looks set to smash the cosy equilibrium of Portland Place once and for all. "The RIBA is nothing sacred," he says. "Just a £3.4 million a year business run by a secretary, a full-time puppet president and a mass of committees."

He not only plans to "turn it into something more realistic," but to spend ony two days a week doing it.

Hackney can afford to be offhand because he has bigger fish to fry, like the presidency of the International Union of Architects where he will again compete with an official RIBA candidate (poor him), and beyond that the massive development of community-base inner city renewal — not just in Britain but all over the world. It is the prospect of global reach that makes Hackney want the IUA job: "That's another weak organisation, just $200,000 a year, but it has access to the Third World."

Roderick Hackney — he became plain Rod many years ago — is 45 years old and the most famous architect ever to establish a base in Macclesfield, an old mill town south of Manchester. A sober dresser with a quick, boyish grin, he no longer lives in the town but commutes from his cattle farm on the moors using a custom-converted six-wheel drive Range Rover that he designed himself. This vehicle, almost as big as the tiny Black Road house he uses as his office, is part of the vast array of construction plant and equipment that Hackney owns, and uses in his community projects. Roan Court, off Black Road, is partly paved with massive, six-inch thick flagstones bought and delivered from a demolished mill 50 miles away. One of Hackney's Hymacs makes short work of shifting their two ton weight. With 20 regional offices, 50 current jobs and a staff of 200, decision making from the bottom up — the keynote of community architecture — may alarm traditionalists but it is certainly not bad for business.

Hackney was born in Liverpool, the oldest of a family of three children, all of whom were evacuated to Wales during the war. His father was a chef who became a hotelier and now lives in retirement in Torquay. His two sisters both started out in the hotel business too, but now one is in PR and the other runs a restaurant. Rod lived in Wales for 19 years, failing his 11-plus but getting into grammar school at 13. From there he was advised to study architecture because he was good at drawing and he went to Manchester University.

On graduation he landed a job designing monorail stations for Expo '67 in Montreal and spent a year in Canada. Then he worked in London for a commercial architect named Bernard Engle before becoming a job architect in Tripoli, supervising the construction of concrete houses for Colonel Gadafy. His next job was for the Danish architect Arne Jacobsen, who had been commissioned to design the headquarters of the National Bank of Kuwait. "Jacobsen delegated totally," said Hackney. "I designed that building myself." If so, it is the only large building he has ever laid claim to.

Hackney's ex-patriate career ended in 1972 when he returned to England and bought a house for £1,000 in the rundown Black Road area of Macclesfield because it was cheap and convenient for Manchester. Although he says he learnt a lot about negotiation in the Middle East, he could hardly have imagined in what good stead the experience was to stand him. Black Road was where his life really began.

The area at that time consisted largely of privately rented slum houses scheduled for demolition and replacement. Hackney swiftly became the spokesman for the community in its dealings with Macclesfield district council and it was largely due to his efforts that a nucleus of 32 houses was designated a General Improvement Area with the residents themselves taking responsibility for the design and the building work — the first time such a thing had ever been done. The results, financially at least, were spectacular. Two years later, for the expenditure of only £127,000 all the houses had been modernised and mortgaged to tenants.

The cost of bulldozing and rebuilding would have been nearer £500,000. This was the shot that was heard round the world.

What success means for Rod Hackney is nowadays difficult to define. In May 1984 his fame led to a summons to meet Prince Charles in an anteroom at Hampton Court, the beginning of a close relationship. In October 1985, after a dinner on the royal train, Hackney told a newspaper that his royal patron had commissioned him to produce a private report on the connection between inner city decay and rioting in Brixton, Handsworth and Broadwater Farm. No one except Hackney's aides and the Prince's entourage has ever seen the report but there is no doubt that it demands more community architecture along the lines of Black Road as an antidote to civil unrest.



Rod Hackney and Range-Rover outside his Black Road headquarters in Macclesfield.

Hackney believes with messianic fervour that self-help groups, backed by professional helpers and money from building societies, pension funds and insurance companies, can re-vitalise all the inner cities. "Self-build is real wealth creation," he says. "The people themselves put their backs into it; they get a house that is worth money and that in turn attracts more money to the area. Derelict inner cities are like war zones, and land in war has very little value." But how does building houses help the national economy? "It makes equity and equity is what pays wages and creates jobs." But equity is just rising house prices, it is not real, like industrial production. Surely some day it will all collapse? "Only one thing makes equity collapse and that is the collapse of the civil peace into riot and disorder." How do you avoid riot and disorder? "More community architecture."

Architecture for Hackney is not aesthetic design but a form of planning in its grandest sense — the salvation of the national economy by the defeat of poverty and despair. It is a massive enterprise divided up into myriad tiny self-help operations in which trained architects work alongside ordinary people. "When I use the word architect I do not mean just the design of buildings. I mean 'The architect of East/West detente,' 'computer architecture,' 'the architecture of policy'. It's not what the RIBA means. What I believe in is the political architecture of a post-industrial age."

All this is huge. It is bigger than the policy of any parliamentary party and Hackney knows it — he spoke at all four party conferences this year. He says bluntly that all the political parties are bankrupt of ideas and will eventually have to come and do a deal with him. "Yes, they will. The local authorities, the Department of the Environment, the Tories, the Socialists, the Liberals and the SDP — they will all have to make a deal with community architecture. They already do it. They are doing it now."

Hackney frequently uses the word revolution. His 1,000 community architect followers are "the new heroes of a new revolution". His policies are "a revolution of stability". His goal is a massive service economy fed on equity and tourism; an oasis of investment stability like Switzerland. Is he never afraid that this dream might fail? "I have never failed. If anything if it looks as if it is turning out badly I change it into something different. The English dislike success, which is all right until it gets out of hand, then you have to do something about it."

When the old hands at the RIBA say that the establishment there will soon calm him down, they don't know what they're talking about.

From the Outback to Broadway

CINEMA by Derek Malcolm

THERE'S nothing better than being agreeably surprised by something you suspect is going to be fairly awful. Crocodile Dundee, the Aussie comedy starring Paul Hogan, which has swept two continents and now bids to take in a third, is a very nice film indeed. From a glance at the plotline, one never would have thought it possible.

The story has a hard-nosed but soft-hearted New York magazine writer following up a story about a legendary Australian in a remote outback township who wrestles crocodiles and wins. When she meets him (Hogan, with a stuffed croc under his arm), he takes her into the bush and educates her into nature's realities. Then she takes him off to New York to educate him into civilisation's. He takes like a duck to her world, and they fall in love.

This should have been a signal for every silly cliche in the book. It isn't but the truths displayed are only relative. In essentials, it really is parody Australia meeting parody America. Somehow it works, and that is chiefly because of Hogan's dry and ironic underplaying.

The man clearly knows exactly what he's doing, building up a ludicrous image and then upending it with wry charm. This makes you laugh at the most obvious jokes, as if you've never heard or seen them before; and both the New Yorker's introduction to the bush and the Australian's effortless conquering of the urban nightmare of New York are equally effective. It's being so simple as keeps the movie going.

It ends on a marvellously effective grace note, when the two bickering lovers (one must praise the performance of Linda Kozlowski's New Yorker too) make it up on the crowded platform of a subway station, sending messages to each other via a chain of waiting commuters — just like one of the better romantic comedies of yore.

All one need add is that Peter Faiman's first screen feature is directed with shrewd economy and shot by Russell Boyd so that both the outback and metropolitan NY look equally startling. Ken Shadey's screenplay also knows its genre precisely. If you don't go along with absurd expectations, you ought to be well satisfied. Crocodile Dundee isn't a very ambitious film, but it is one of those popular entertainments that doesn't pour treacle all over you. In fact, it almost makes you like the human race.

Howard . . . A New Breed Of Hero is the latest multi-million dollar Hollywood fiasco to hit town — the story of a duck mysteriously transported from in front of his telly in duck world to Cleveland, Ohio, where the lead singer of an all-girl rock band befriends him.

Mysteriously tied to the appearance of this three-foot tall relation of Donald in our surprised universe is a maverick scientist, bent on destroying duck, girl and the whole damned thing.

If this sounds like an unpromising mixture of Disney and Return Of The Jedi, that's exactly what it is. Willard Huyck is the director and, aided and abetted by executive producer George Lucas, he spends the first half of the film trying for charm and the second half on laser-beam pyrotechnics and special effects.

The result is the sort of thing you could take your children to at Christmas, preferably drugged up with cough mixture and gin, but hardly the epic with which millions are made.

It is, truth to tell, tedious in the extreme for an adult with normal intelligence, though there are a few moments when a good line surfaces. "What's a pizza?" says Howard to his friend. "It's a circular Italian food object," comes the reply. I'll tell you this: I'd rather eat ten at one sitting than see this travesty through again.



Paul Hogan as the Ocker abroad.

Catchers in the wry

Michael Billington welcomes When I Was A Girl

IT is slightly ironic that the Whitehall, once the home of Paul Raymond nudie romps, is now alive to the sound of sexual candour. Two years after bowing in at the Bush, Sharman Macdonald's When I Was A Girl I Used To Scream And Shout is now installed in this Art Deco redoubt; and the occasion both confirms this Glaswegian writer's zippy promise and reminds us that the commercial theatre depends on the subsidised sector for much of its energy. Starve subsidised companies and you will eventually kill the West End.

What I like about Ms Macdonald's play is that it deals with female disappointment without indulging in rancorous, man-hating hysteria. It even shows compassion for a benighted older generation.

Set on the rocky Scottish east coast, it shows a mother and daughter on fretful holiday. Morag, the mum, is a lonely Scots puritan pining for a grandchild; daughter Fiona is 32, unmarried, independent "With no bottom and a social conscience". Also invited along is Fiona's one-time best friend, Vari, now a broody, boundlessly fertile mother-of-three whose presence sparks off memories of the rude sexual experiments the two chums conducted as children.

The novelist Joyce Cary once said that every woman's life is a tragedy. Without going quite that far, Ms Macdonald suggests that women tend to end up trapped whatever they do particularly in the God-fearing Scottish climate. Morag clearly denied her husband much conjugal pleasure ("If he got it once in ten years he was lucky") and is paying the price in solitude.

Fiona, brought up to believe sex was a sin, avenged herself on her mother, when she threatened to abscond to the Gulf States with a boyfriend, by getting pregnant at 15; after an early abortion, she is now determinedly childless.

Despite a brief reference to nuclear reactors the play sometimes seems hermetically personal. What keeps it abundantly alive is Ms Macdonald's wit, frankness, and forgiveness. She depicts Morag's lower-middle-class joylessness ("We never had a symphony in the home — there was no need") without brutal condescension. She also captures what I take to be the authentic sound of pre-pubescent bedroom girl-talk: the pair here are more interested in guys than dolls and in wee willies rather than Tired Tims. But her real point is that ignorance about sex feeds a ravening curiosity.

Since the Bush, Simon Stoke's production has acquired two star-names without damage to its essential fabric. Julie Walters as Fiona excellently suggests both the impishness of childhood and the insecurity of the independent woman (though that dilemma deserves greater exploration by the dramatist). Geraldine James as Vari is not quite the "lumpy" figure indicated by the text but is very good at conveying the weariness of being treated as a milk-machine.

And, in their original roles, both Sheila Reid as the tight-lipped, god-bothering Morag, and John Gordon Sinclair as an improbable schoolboy stud are accurate and true.

Liberal in the lion's den

John Vidal at the Lyric

SOUTH AFRICAN plays which pass through Britain tend to be deeply felt, angry young vehicles for holding up the Pretoria government to justified ridicule and hostility. They have an instant appeal to the outraged liberal conscience but by focussing on the struggle of the blacks and the coloureds, too often they let their white audiences off the hook.

Of course it is important to appreciate the struggle for justice but theatrical agit prop ultimately serves few causes because no confrontation of ideas is allowed. It is theatre in the missionary position, for the converted only, satisfying but pretty unimaginative. Happily the Bijers Sunbird is an altogether different proposition.

A two-hander, written and performed by white South Africans, it has incurred the wrath of Anti-Apartheid who are picketing all performances, and Hammersmith Council, who are under pressure to withdraw their grant to the theatre for breaking the two-way cultural boycott. None of the ideologically chaste protestors outside the Lyric would have seen the play. I suggest they do before they disrupt it further because it is a small gem.

In Johannesburg's police detention cell an Afrikaaner terrorist of the Sixties and a liberal trade unionist teacher come face to face. The former, cynical and disillusioned, is being hold out of spite for previously committed — and paid for — crimes against the state. The latter, young, intellectual and insufferably smug in his "correct" reasoning, is in custody for minor dissent.

It is a bitter confrontation between two men both committed to overthrowing a corrupt system in different ways. Each fears and loathes the other. Isolation has fed rumour, mistrust and treachery; two generations of the struggle are hopelessly at odds.

As in Pravda, for example, it is the intellectual do-gooder who is witheringly chopped down. The onslaught of the older revolutionary, Adam Bijers, on the blandness of the well-meaning who watch the struggle from afar is devastating. "The unmistakeable smell of a white liberal just before his conscience goes off" is one line taken almost at random..

In Adam Bijers, Robert Kirby has created a memorable character. Sean Taylor possesses an equally memorable voice, and plays the tragic, mistrusted veteran of the struggle with great power. Jan Maytham as the teacher is on shakier ground, having to convince more than just Bijers that reason is the best weapon.

There is a fine irony in a South African company coming to Britain with a play that mocks so many of our stereotyped attitudes as well as condemning its own divisions. Theatrically it would be sad to see this play taken off in a swell of dogma. The tragedy of Bijers Sunbird is that both protagonists are seeking the same ends. In their brief, yet stormy, encounter some sort of understanding is built up as the two men reveal themselves. Theatre, it would seem, could teach us all a few lessons.

The Rembrandt of a young girl

Rembrandt fetches £7.2m

By Donald Wintersgill

A REMBRANDT was sold at Sotheby's last week for £7,260,000. A study of a young woman, head and shoulders, wearing a gold-trimmed cloak, it is the finest painting by Rembrandt to come up at auction for more than 15 years. Sotheby's had been forecasting a price of around £2 million.

The auctioneers claimed a record price. But Rembrandt's work varied a great deal and the previous prices are out of date. A portrait of his son, Titus, not in good condition, made £798,000 at Christie's in 1965. His Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer sold in New York in 1961 for $2.3 million (£821,000), more expensive in real terms than the portrait sold last week, though of much better quality.

Last week's buyer was described only as a private collector. The underbidder was Mr Richard Feigen, a New York dealer. Some claimed that the Getty Museum of Malibu, California, was the winner; others that the winner was Mr Ronald Lauder, heir to the Estee Lauder cosmetics fortune.

The American-owned Rembrandt was consigned to sell before new US tax laws go into effect on January 1.

In the steps of a giant

OPERA by Tom Sutcliffe

ELIJAH MOSHINSKY'S Royal Opera staging of Handel's Samson had to confront two intractable problems: first how to make the static cerebral tragedy of this oratorio into a palpably dynamic experience; and secondly how to marry the interpretative solecism of Jon Vickers's genius with the contemporary fad for so-called authenticity.

The clever, sober solution was to frame Vickers's extraordinary metaphysical performance with post modern furnishings, shifting neo-classical architectural columns and arches, black costumes of Handel's era, and a subtle contrasting of devout Israelitish puritanism with the luxurious, periwigged Philistines.

The unrelenting focus was fixed on Vickers's epic self-disgust, the star being in fact trundled about the stage on a carnival-style cart that nicely suggested both the characterers' predicament and the moral intent of the oratorio form. The music followed Vickers's majestic lead.

Now, Covent Garden have revived the work without Vickers, and with Roger Norrington bringing his own brand of inspired, slightly romanticised authenticity to the musical interpretation. The orchestra played with style and beauty, and some of the singing is decorous. But, with Robert Tear substituting for Vickers and often unwisely attempting to mimic Vickers's vocal and physical mannerisms, there is yawning vacuum at the centre of the frame.

Tear successfully followed Vickers into the role of Peter Grimes at the Royal Opera, managing to build an individual performance by spooning pints of Peter Pears into the Vickers's gallon.

But he is utterly incapable of evoking the heady metaphysical vision, which drew Handel, like Milton, to the Samson story. This is merely a provincial oratorio performance that just happened to be in odd costumes: and Tear is clad like a bald Florestan in place of the curly-locked, long-robed biblical prophet presented by Vickers.

The best performance now, echoing Vickers's stature and expressiveness, is Donald McIntyre's notable Harapha — the Philistine captain who challenges Samson and introduces a note of sneering comic relief. McIntyre, like Vickers, finds Handel's scale work tricky to manage for such a heavy grand operatic voice, especially at Norrington's now much faster, lighter tempi. But the role is excellently drawn.

Gwynne Howell as Samson's father, Manoah, sounds in very emotional form, and Sarah Walker's Micah — not here a male friend, but a Queen Anne clone — is again strongly sung, though less at ease than she was. Carol Vaness does all the female roles, which would offer a dramatic point with Vickers as Samson. She sounds good, and coos nicely if unrhythmically as Delila, but is just too disengaged to light up the show at the end with Let The Bright Seraphim.

The chorus, on the whole respectable, lacks the required kick in the guts that Handel certainly counted on. Roger Norrington throughout worked hard to inject vitality. The musical beauties of this glorious score, a true British masterpiece, well showed. Norrington certainly deserves a chance with some of those 19th century standard works that have been poorly conducted at the Royal Opera of late.

At war and at sea

By Ludovic Kennedy

THE LONGEST BATTLE: THE WAR AT SEA, 1939-45, by Richard Hough (Weidenfeld, £14.95). RULING THE WAVES: AN UNOFFICIAL PORTRAIT OF THE ROYAL NAVY, by Dennis Barker (Viking, £12.95).

IT is hard to know what particular readers the authors of these two books had in mind. **The Longest Battle** (a misnomer, for it was a series of battles) is a competent rehash from printed sources of the principal naval actions of the last war, both in the European and Far Eastern theatres. Rather more space is given to the activities of the American navy than the British, the object presumably being to sell the book there as well as here.

But, apart from naval buffs, will the American reador be any more interested in the doings of the Royal Navy in, say, the Mediterranean, than the British reader in the confused, repetitious and ultimately tedious accounts of carrier battles in the Pacific? I have always found that other people's battles, like other people's crimes, do not on the whole travel well.

This is not to say that parts of The Longest Battle are not a very good read. Mr Hough mingles felicitous phrases — likening the sounds of the first bombs dropping at Pearl Harbour to "the rumbling overture of the timpani in a Wagner overture" with sloppy ones — "In spite of the vocal bedlam, the Wildcats were having the greatest party of their lives" (Wildcats were aeroplanes).

There are some inaccuracies. The first British combined operation of the war was not at Bruneval at the end of February 1942, but just a year earlier at the Lofoten Islands where the Navy sank many ships and the Army rounded up 200 German prisoners and 300 Norwegian volunteers. In the Bismarck action survivors' reports indicate that Vian's torpedoes made no hits, while the single Enigma decrypt was of no help, having been overtaken by events.

I wish, too, that Mr Hough, having relied as heavily as he has on my account of that battle, had done the courtesy of including my book Pursuit in his list of "Some books consulted" as well as crediting my publishers (Collins) for having pinched from the same book the double-page map of the operation which they had specially prepared for it. Mr Hough says that this was drawn by a Mr Patrick Leeson. "Copied" would have been more accurate.

But the most discreditable of Mr Hough's inaccuracies occurs on page 56. Having related how a U-boat commander was court-martialled and shot for massacring survivors in the water, he goes on to tell of the crew of another U-boat

"who were rescued, brought on board, and then hunted down and shot one by one over a period of twelve hours, the last two sailors being found huddled in the ship's screw alley. Churchill was outraged when he heard and issued instructions to avoid a repetition."

This deplorable incident, known as the Barralong affair, occurred not in the last war but in the first one, and why Mr Hough should want gratuitously to insert it here must be a matter for him and his conscience.

For any young man thinking of making the Navy his career I can think of no better present than **Ruling the Waves.** There is almost no aspect of the Navy of today that it does not cover, whether it be the Fleet Air Arm or submarines, the Wrens, or the Marines, leave and messing. It is carefully written and refreshingly critical.

Knocking the Arabs

By Edward W. Said

SEMITES AND ANTI-SEMITES by Bernard Lewis (Weidenfeld, £15).

BERNARD LEWIS is a British Orientalist now living in the United States where he has become a neo-conservative Cold War polemicist whose hostile attention is focused on the Arabs and Islam. He has now patched together a disorganised and tendentious book out of articles that have appeared elsewhere (in Commentary among other places).

The first half of Semites and Anti-Semites is a potted history of anti-Semitism that advances very little beyond what can be found in the work of Leon Poliakov. That is frequently Lewis's way, since it enables him to set the stage with a great show of scholarship before he gets to his main ideological business. In this instance it is to advance the view that the Arabs and Muslims have now become anti-Semites in the European sense of that term, a charge from which he somewhat exempts them before the nineteenth century.

The remarkable thing about this effort is how little evidence Lewis's allegations actually dredge up. Readers of his contribution to a recent symposium on "terrorism" will recall his habit of saying both that Islam cannot be said to produce terrorism, and yet that it does, all the while letting popular media cliches about the association between "Islam" and terrorism do the work for him of actually incriminating an entire culture and religion.

A similar procedure is followed in Semites and Anti-Semites, with equally problematic (to say the least) results. Thus in one place he will speak of a "sudden outburst of anti-Semitic literature," a phrase suggesting mountains of books and tracts, but which on closer inspection yields only two titles, one published in Beirut in 1869 and another in Cairo in 1893. The cause of this "outburst" we are told was the Dreyfus Case, which since it didn't occur until 1894 one supposes to have infected the Arab world retroactively.

A random quotation from an Egyptian newspaper, a reference to the presence of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion in Arabic, an account of the contents of a magazine in 1964 — these supposedly establish the existence of anti-Semitism in the Arab world, although no distinctions are made between instances, trends, beliefs and policies; usually, however, Lewis is omniscient in ascribing anti-Semitism to the people and culture themselves. This is the Orientalist practise of knowing only by reading in snippets, of generalising imperially without sympathetic or living knowledge of the condemned society and its culture.

In other places Lewis refers to Arab tirades that link Menachem Begin to Genghis Khan and Hitler (the latter purportedly "a much admired hero"), but he will not give more than an item of evidence "proving" that Hitler was admired by some people, and he obscures the fact that it was a few anti-British Arab leaders who negotiated with the Nazis in their war against British colonialism.

He also forgets to mention that the party of the present Prime Minister of Israel negotiated with the Nazis too. Moreover, Lewis prudently overlooks the fact that Labour and Revisionist Israeli governments made common cause during the 1970s and 1980s with the Lebanese Phalanges, an openly fascist Christian party.

That there is anti-Semitism in the Arab world and elsewhere is a fact: a sorry, appallingly ugly and inexcusable fact, but a fact just the same, although Lewis rarely does more than allude and insinuate, letting his audience deduce the worst about Islam and the Arabs.

All facts, however, are located in contexts, and it is the two contexts of Lewis's facts that are significantly left out. One context is America after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, when it was felt by the Zionist lobby that the spectacle of ruthless Israeli power on the TV screen would have to be effaced from memory by the strategy of incriminating the media as anti-Semitic for showing those scenes at all.

Since then the reconstitution of a primitive ideology eliminating both the siege of Beirut and the Palestinians from history (as in Joan Peter's book, From Time Immemorial) has gone forward. This ideology has put up a figurative fence around Israel, decreeing that any criticism of the state is tantamount to old style Nazi anti-Semitism.

Lewis has, to put it mildly, done nothing to disgrace its views of things, with results in this book for the uninformed or the unaware (George Kennan for one) that are intended to be alarming. That for example Israel speaks of itself as the State of the entire Jewish people, its Palestinian citizens merely as "Non-Jews," is not considered to enter into either the semantics or the epistemology of Lewis's disgracefully incomplete argument.

That these facts might also be more pertinent to an Arab Palestinian population either exiled or colonised by Israel than "anything which might arouse sympathy for the Jews" — a sorely wanting quality among Palestinians and their supporters, according to Lewis — does not occur to him, as he ambles on with objectionable little newspaper references, shorn of any substance, any social reference, any sense of history or institutions.

This is natural enough in the work of a journalist who had made a recent name for himself as a political enemy of the Arabs and Islam. It is worse in the work of an historian who simply omits the second context of his work, that is, the full contemporary history of the Middle East.

Who could deny that there is atavism in the Islamic revival, or that the Arab regimes are a corrupt, incompetent lot, able neither to wage war courageously and unhypocritically nor to conclude a peace pact with Israel decently? But do these facts allow us simply never to mention the fantastic outpouring of official religious and political literature in Israel whose proclaimed attitude toward the *goyim* is startlingly racist, is horrifyically exclusivist?

What are we to make of rabbinic pronouncements to the Israeli army, legislating that whereas it is humane to help a wounded Jew on the Sabbath, it is correct to let a wounded gentile die?

What about the library of Israeli works on the Arab mentality, or the laziness of the Arab character, the degradation of Islam, etc? Why do Israeli consulates around the world hand out John Laffin's disgusting tract, The Arab Mind? What about the tradition of anti-gentile polemic in historical Judaism? Does not this warrant so much as a disapproving sneer; and is it not part of the anti-Semitism that Lewis so deplores?

One could go on about Lewis's tactful omissions, from the wholescale dispossession of the "non-Jews," to the minute details of apartheid on the West Bank, to the rampant fanaticism of supporters of Yuval Nemean, Sharon, Eitan, etc, all of it coming from the essentially racialist distinction between Jew and non-Jew. Somehow, Lewis exempts all of this from consideration.

There are interesting issues here, which Lewis's book is too intellectually feeble, too drenched in pious cant, to debate. For example, is anti-Semitism best understood apart from, say, the oppression and slavery of blacks, the genocidal massacres of Armenians by the Turks, the extermination of the native American peoples by numerous European populations? Is anti-Semitism, as Lewis implies, a metaphysical thing, or is it one among many historical trends?

How has the Palestinian case altered the status of the Jew, from that of victim to that of oppressor? What about the Western philo-Semitism that supports Israel so munificently? And is there some important way in which the terrible sufferings of the Jews can no longer serve to exempt them from opprobrium when in the name of the Jewish people Israeli armies or jet bombers ravage refugee camps, raze Palestinian villages, impose wholesale collective punishments on Arab towns, bomb Arab cities, massacre civilians, even as Israel's propagandists in the West proclaim the state's "purity of arms," the sanctity of its moral policies, its right to pre-emptive strikes that produce 100 Arab deaths for every Jewish death?

You would never know from Lewis's prose that the Jewish State and not "international anti-Semitism" militarily dominates the Middle East, and that it is Palestinians, and not Jews, who today are marked with special identity cards, licence plates, and "pales of settlement."

Those are matters of attention, difficult though that may be in so inflamed a situation as that obtaining between Israel and the Arab world. But no: none of it is tackled by Bernard Lewis, whose posture of historical gravity is restricted to the canonical topics of anti-Jewish extremism and the proclivity of Islam to infection by the worst Western imports. Semites and Anti-Semites will serve more as propaganda of the age of Reagan and Begin than as history.

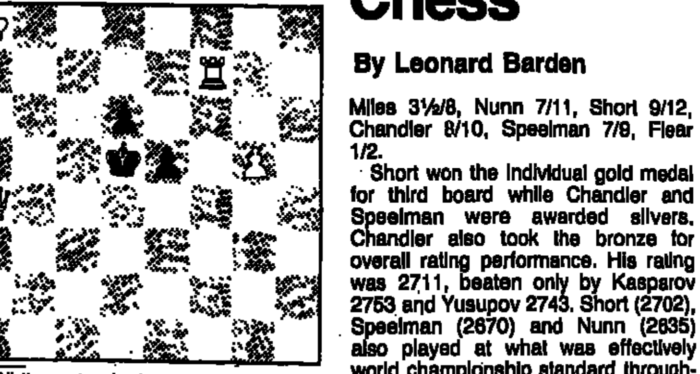
'What are we to make of rabbinic pronouncements to the Israeli army, legislating that whereas it is humane to help a wounded Jew on the Sabbath, it is correct to let a wounded gentile die?'

Edward Said, who was born in Palestine, is Professor of Comparative Literature at Columbia University, and author of Orientalism, Covering Islam, and The World, the Text and the Critic.

Chess

By Leonard Barden

No. 1937



White mates in three moves, against any defence (by N. Mironenko, USSR, 1973).

Solution No. 1936

White K at QR8, Q at QR2, B at QN6, N at KB2, Ps at Q5 and KR2. Black K at KB5. Mate in three.

1 Q-R7. If K-B6 2 Q-QR1 K-N7 3 Q-KR1. If K-B4 2 Q-KN7 K-B5 3 Q-B6. If K-N4 2 Q-KB7 K-R5 3 B-Q8.

JUST half a point separated England from a triumph over the all-conquering Russians at the Dubai chess olympics. Final totals were USSR 40/56, England 39½, United States 38½, Hungary 34½, Iceland and Bulgaria 34. England were best on match points, conceding only their draw with the USSR and their collapse against Spain but winning their other twelve matches.

Top board Tony Miles was out of form and bottom board Glenn Flear played only twice, but our other grandmasters all played exceptionally well. Individual totals, excluding the 4-0 win by default in the first round, were Miles 3½/8, Nunn 7/11, Short 9/12, Chandler 8/10, Speelman 7/9, Flear 1/2.

Short won the individual gold medal for third board while Chandler and Speelman were awarded silvers. Chandler also took the bronze for overall rating performance. His rating was 2711, beaten only by Kasparov 2753 and Yusupov 2743. Short (2702), Speelman (2670) and Nunn (2635) also played at what was effectively world championship standard throughout the event.

The top four teams finished exactly in the same places and in the same order as at Salonika 1984. There the USSR scored 41, England 37, USA 35, Hungary 34½. Comparison shows that both England and the US have made a significant advance, particularly since in 1984 the Russians were without Kasparov.

That said, it is debatable whether England's superb result marks a step towards gold in 1988 or 1990 or a peak which will be difficult to match. Undoubtedly the Russians suffered from poor team selection, omitting Belyavsky who played No 1 in Salonica and whose sharp and creative style is ideal for team competition. The Americans will be better next time with their rising young star Joel Benjamin, who refused to play in Dubai, while the English team is almost at its optimum. Presumably by 1988 Short will be top board, but addition of a further world class player — needed to overcome the Russians — may be delayed until a new talent such as Michael Adams reaches Olympic level.

Controversy continues over England's dramatic ½-3½ loss to Spain which effectively saved the Russians. It is said that the Russians loaned their files on the England players to the Spanish camp, while right at the start of the round England protested unavailingly about crowds round the boards. Miles fell into an opening trap and Nunn's position was worse. The Spanish coach Georgadze, a USSR grandmaster, gave advice to one of his players and also spoke in Russian to Kasparov and others. England again protested, but Georgadze got off with a warning and the chief arbiter would not consider a stiffer penalty. Of course if the Spaniard had been forfeited and England had won the gold by half a point, arguments would have been fiercer still.

England women faded after a good start and finished eighth, about our normal position in the women's olympics where Eastbloc nations still dominate. The USSR won from Hungary and Rumania, and West Germany (sixth) were the only Western team ahead of England.

Finally, thanks to merchant bankers Duncan Lawrie, who have sponsored the England team for a decade and this time went to the expense of flying the players out to Dubai several days early for acclimatisation. Almost beating the Russians at their national game is an achievement of which every chessplayer can be proud.

Jaime Filguth (Brazil) — GM Murray Chandler (England)
English Opening
(Dubai Olympics 1986)

1 P-QB4 P-K4 2 N-QB3 N-KB3
3 N-B3 N-B3 4 P-K3 B-N5
5 Q-B2 O-O 6 N-Q5 R-K1
7 P-QR3 B-B1 8 B-Q3 P-KN3

White's opening plan turns out harmless and he soon regrets his obtrusive bishop. The critical line is 7 Q-B5, though theory considers that, too, as well playable for Black. Instead of White's bishop move, 8 NxN ch QxN 9 P-Q3 followed later by B-K2, N-Q2 and B-B3 would give some light square play to offset White's passive position.

9 NxN ch QxN 10 B-K4 P-Q3
11 P-QN4 Q-K2 12 B-N2 B-N2
13 O-O B-N5 14 P-Q3 N-Q1
15 N-Q2 P-QB3 16 QR-K1 P-KB4
17 B-B3 BxB 18 NxB P-K5
19 BxB PxN! 20 B-N2 Q-N4
21 P-N3 Q-N5

Effectively, end of game. It is now just a question whether Black will mate at KN7 or KR7.

22 K-R1 N-B2 23 P-K4 Q-R6
24 R-KN1 N-R3 25 Q-B3 R-K4
26 P-N4 NxP 27 RxN PxR
28 R-KN1 QR-K1 29 P-B5 P-Q4
30 PxP P-N6! 31 Resigns

A COUNTRY DIARY

NEVERN ESTUARY: The low sun threw tones of dying bracken into rich contrast with the pale blue sky. Around the river glistening mud supported a flock of about 140 curlews. Disturbed, they rose up as a group of individuals. Starlings would have moved like a choreographed corps de ballet but the curlews swung around in the sunshine like apprentice country dancers. The sun lit up their pale underparts and etched the strong beaks. A smaller group of ringed plovers tick-tocked along the river shore, starting up from time to time for a nervous fly-about before re-settling to their picking and pecking. A shag was fishing with his look of tufted surprise. Close by a cormorant gave us a good chance for comparison. The cormorant looked like a Brylcreem boy whilst the shag was a spring-diving punk. On the sands we saw small sand volcanoes bubbling up depositing sediment in the same manner that probably once produced the rock formations in Freshwater East. Round the cliffs we met bullfinches, long tailed tits and a surprising number of flowers. Most of them are tired, beaten by wind and rain. Only the whin glowed with the confidence of someone who has picked the right clothes for the right occasion. The trees are laden with lichens whose fruiting bodies present a miniature mysterious world.

Audrey Insch

By ENIGMATIST

ACROSS

1. Medical man taking to transport system (8)
5. Coward's copyright (6)
9. English dressing (8)
10. Black dog (6)
11. "Shoestring" writer (8)
12. Eliot looking after a European capital (6)
14. A small letter? Same again (7, 3)
18. Swimmer and King married a beauty parlour (4-6)
22. Blockhead's year (6)
23. What the ark carries, I approve (4, 4)
24. Sank teeth into delicacy (6)
25. Disciplinarian's film (8)
26. Robs vessel (6)
27. First man on the Nile (5, 3)

DOWN

1. Letter lies ripped in breakfast dish? (6)
2. Cast seat to the audience (6)
3. Masseur's games at cardtable (6)
4. How one, with a clean conscience, deals in nylon, etc (10)
6. Physicist not to be confused with Green (8)
7. 5-iron used to get round edges of green by Eastern grape-farmer (8)
8. Noise distorted with ear not being facilitated (2, 6)
13. They row, and fire and bellows mingle (6-4)
15. Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos about to equip vessels (8)
16. A cricket club's fantastic dress (8)
17. Particular sighting round part of London (8)
19. South African plant for tea (6)
20. Drink a drop (6)
21. Most of 19 gets married for the time being (3, 3)

F A D I T V T S
UMPTEENTH OZONE
L P T G E L K N
MURDOCH CHURNED
I O U O M O
NEVER HEMINGWAY
A E I P I E
TARSOMETATARSUS
E N R S U T
DANGEROUS DONNE
E S G A B R
THEBELL FORWHOM
U D A Y O W I O
TOLLS PENSIONER
U E E H D N E N

Rixi Markus invites readers to try their hand at her —



Christmas bridge competition

YOU are West. Which card would you select for your opening lead in the following situations?

PROBLEM 1

Dealer East; love all; teams.

WEST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
♠J 10 9 6				NB
♥K 6 5	1H(1)	NB	2S	NB
♦9	3D	NB	3S	NB
♣Q 10 8 4 3	4NT(2)	NB	5S	NB
	5NT(2)	NB	6D	NB
	7D	NB	NB	NB

(1) North-South's bidding is in the "canape" style, whereby the shorter of two suits is opened first.
(2) Blackwood.

PROBLEM 2

Dealer North; North-South vulnerable; teams.

WEST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
♠A 8 7 3			3NT(1)	NB
♥9 4 3	5D	NB	NB	NB
♦8 5				
♣A Q 7 5				

(1) A gambling bid, showing a completely solid minor suit and not more than a queen outside.

PROBLEM 3

Dealer North; love all; pairs.

WEST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
♠J			3C	NB
♥4 2	3NT	NB	NB	NB
♦K 7 6 5 4 2				
♣K 9 8 2				

PROBLEM 4

Dealer West; East-West vulnerable; teams.

WEST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
♠10 8 6		NB	NB	NB
♥10	1S	NB	4S	NB
♦K J 7 6 5 4	4NT	NB	5D	NB
♣K 9 2	6S	NB	NB	NB

PROBLEM 5

Dealer North; love all; teams.

WEST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
♠J 10 9 7			1H	NB
♥6 2	3C	NB	3D	NB
♦K 9 8	4NT	NB	5H	NB
♣J 7 5 3	7NT	NB	NB	NB

PROBLEM 6

Dealer North; game all; teams.

WEST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
♠10 7 4			1C	1D
♥9 8 7	1S	NB	2H	NB
♦Q 8 7 6	3S	NB	4S	NB
♣Q 7 4	NB	NB		

PROBLEM 7

Dealer South; love all; teams.

WEST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
♠10 9 8	1S	NB	2C	NB
♥A 9 6 3	2D	NB	4S	NB
♦9 7 5	5S	NB	6S	NB
♣Q 5 4	NB	NB		

PROBLEM 8

Dealer South; love all; teams.

WEST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
♠A J 9 6 4	1H	1S	2D	2S
♥A 6	NB	NB	3C	NB
♦7 6 4 2	3H	NB	4H	NB
♣9 3	NB	NB		

Entries should be sent to Rixi Markus, The Guardian Weekly, PO Box 19, Cheadle, Cheshire, SK8 1DD, to arrive by January 16th. Prizes of £25, £15 and £10 will be awarded for the three best solutions, and my answers and comments will be published during February. For the theme of this year's Christmas Competition I have chosen "opening leads" which makes the problems interesting and also somehow easier.